THE OXFORD HISTORY OF MODERN INDIA 1740-1975

Second Edition

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE *Oxford History of Modern India* here presented is a reprint of Part III of the third edition of the *Oxford History of India* (1958), originally compiled by the late Vincent Smith. In the third edition, however, Part III or the British period was completely re-written by the present author and it is this which is here presented. The part has been detached from the rest of the work for the convenience of those who are mainly concerned with the modern period of Indian history. The part was designed to be complete in itself, as explained in the preface to the third edition of the Oxford History. It has not therefore been thought necessary to modify it apart from embodying the corrections of the 1961 reprint.

The title *The Oxford History of Modern India* has been chosen in order to emphasize the angle of approach to the period. The aim has been to treat the subject, not as the story of the rise and decline of the British power, its successes and failures, but as the history of India during the period of British activity. The theme is the transformation of India under the impact of western influences of which the British were the agents and of the forces of Indian thought and action which that impact provoked.

Notes on authorities will be found at the end of each chapter and a synchronistic chronological table at the end of the book.

The problem of transliteration of Indian names and words has been a difficult one. A book hoping to be read by a wide public should be as clear as possible in its treatment of names and technical terms, but at the same time there must be some consistency and conformance to scientific usage. A further difficulty is that many Indian words have become naturalized in the English language with spellings which are familiar rather than scientific. Thus we have 'Meerut' for 'Mīrat', 'hookah' for 'hūqa', and 'thug' for 'thag'. The last example illustrates a further complication, that of a word undergoing a change of meaning (ritual strangler to general gangster) as well as a change of spelling. In this book the Hunterian system of transliteration has been generally followed but diacritical marks have usually been omitted. Familiar spellings such as Cawnpore and Lucknow, which may be said to have passed into the English language, have been retained. But where a word has changed its meaning as well as its spelling in passing into English, such as *thug*, the correct transliteration has been given. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* has been used as a general guide to the naturalization of Indian words into English.

Book IV, chapters 6–9 are a revised version of chapters contributed to the third edition of P. E. Roberts's *History of British India*.

P.S.

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BOOK I

The Rise of the British Dominion
1740–1818

INTRODUCTION

THE British period of Indian history is usually reckoned to begin in 1757 with the battle of Plassey. It is sometimes predated to 1740, the opening year of the War of the Austrian Succession, which precipitated the Anglo-French struggle for supremacy in India, and sometimes postponed to 1761, the year of Panipat or even to 1774, the year of Warren Hastings's assumption of the new governor-generalship established by the Regulating Act. Any date must be somewhat arbitrary in marking a political transition which in fact took nearly eighty years to accomplish. The date of Plassey no more obviously marked a political revolution to contemporaries than the fall of Constantinople in 1453 marked a cultural and intellectual one to fifteenth-century Europe. But both are convenient as marking a point in time after which an awareness of large changes developed from the status of a minor speculation to that of a major concern. An Indian political observer before 1740 was mainly occupied with Mughul imperial politics and their complementary Maratha affairs. Between 1740 and 1757 he was concerned with Mughul-Afghan-Maratha affairs in the north and the Anglo-French struggle in the south, while after Plassey and still more after 1761, the year both of Panipat and the final defeat of the French in the south, he concentrated his attention on the rising British power with sidelong glances at the Marathas and Haidar Ali. It was then that the idea of political revolution, as distinct from mere political change, became uppermost in men's minds.

During this period of Indian history it is specially necessary to avoid the mistake of interpreting the past in terms of the future. What has occurred in time cannot be undone, but it does not necessarily follow that nothing else could have happened, or that the actual course of events was the only possible or even probable outcome of the interplay of historical forces and personalities. It was not clear to most Indian observers before the years 1756–61, as it is obvious to us, that the Mughul empire was already moribund. Indeed, its partial revival under Mirza Najaf Khan postponed the full realization until about 1785. Nor was it clear then to the same observer that the Maratha confederacy must crumble and that British supremacy was inevitable. To contemporary minds, unaware of the relative strength of the various factors involved, all was uncertainty and anything might emerge.

It is therefore worth considering the causes which secured so decided a success for the British in this apparently doubtful field, a success maintained with so few interruptions that the rise of the British star to its zenith seems, at a distance indeed, to resemble the serene motion of a celestial body.

The cause to which this success is most commonly attributed is

superiority of arms and military science. The British in the first place (after the defeat of the French) enjoyed unquestioned supremacy at sea. They could come and go as they would, repair their losses, and strike at the interior from several points at will. The moment of greatest peril was when reinforcements were cut off for a time during the American War of Independence. Sea-power was decisive in the sense that British supremacy could not have been obtained without it. But it would not have sufficed in itself if the British had not possessed the resources with which to exploit this advantage. Sea-power was a necessary preliminary to success, but not in itself the cause of that success.

The British undoubtedly possessed superiority in arms and military tactics. Their cannon and their small arms were superior in quality to those generally in Indian use, and all their officers were trained in military tactics and strategy. Compared to them the Indian troops, both rank and file and leaders, were amateurs, greatly gifted though some of them might be. Amateurs can be great generals, as the case of Cromwell proved, but even he could do little until he had trained the New Model as his instrument. Thus the genius of men like Haidar Ali was often frustrated by the lack of trained subordinates and of material with which to carry out their plans. Indian leaders early began to pay European military science the compliment of imitation. These efforts failed ultimately it is true but not before the Sikhs had produced a military machine which was in some respects superior to that of British India. The failure of European military science in Indian hands was due to other than military causes. European military science was an important contributory cause of the British success, but not in itself a decisive one.

The factor of leadership has often been stressed. It is true that the British (like the French) produced men of rare distinction, from the conquistador type in the person of Clive to the military genius of Wellington, from the subtle statesmanship of a Warren Hastings to the ardent empire-building of a Wellesley. If they had not existed the enterprise could not have succeeded, but their existence alone was not enough. The Indian states also had leaders of brilliance. Madhu Rao Sindia, Haidar Ali Khan, Mirza Najaf Khan, Nana Fadnavis, several of the Peshwas, and Ranjit Singh would take high rank in any assembly of soldiers and statesmen. The British had a greater advantage in the ranks of secondary leaders, for their scientific training produced a general level of competence not equalled on the Indian side. But even this advantage was not decisive in itself, and it tended to be reduced as special training, often with European aid, was developed by the Indian princes.

An advantage which has been more justly stressed was that of military discipline. From the time of Alexander the cult of discipline has given to men an often decisive advantage over superior numbers of brave but unregulated troops. The habit of obedience, the willingness to face danger and suffer hardship to order, the power of restraint. and

the inner cohesion which discipline breeds, provide a morale far superior to anything which personal or clan loyalty, the spirit of adventure or personal bravery can produce of themselves. The Portuguese had been able to secure and maintain their hold upon India with their scanty forces by its aid, and they were only driven out by troops whose discipline was more effective. It was this quality which gave both French and English their early sensational successes. Discipline not only meant that groups of men would act with cohesion and steadiness at the command of one; it also meant that the leadership was reliable as well as skilful, and integrated with the overall direction of affairs. Reliability is promoted by any system wherein each man depends for his promotion upon his professional conduct and is assured of his maintenance so long as he is loyal. The habitual loyalty, even in the face of reverses, of European officers, was a frequent cause of comment in Indian society from the time of the Portuguese onwards. The system of personal attachments which prevailed in India from the emperor downwards, and was only partially modified by the *mansabdari* system even in its hey-day, made loyalty a purely personal thing and as such dependent upon the fates of individuals and the turns of fortune's wheel. The impulse to independent action was often great and the risks of unquestioned obedience considerable.

But even more valuable to the British was the civil discipline of the Company's servants. An undisciplined state possessing disciplined troops may have far more anarchic possibilities than one resting solely upon a complex system of personal loyalties, as the fate of the Sikh kingdom showed. A group of chiefs broke up within ten years a powerful kingdom through lack of inner cohesion and the existence of a fine military machine only made the collapse more violent and complete. The Mughuls organized a joint military-civil imperial service in the *mansab* system, which prevented this particular danger, but they did not change the traditional personal basis of government. The Company, on the other hand, possessed a hierarchy of civil officials which in its way was as effective and disciplined as its military forces. They possessed not only a group of men dependent on the Company for their prospects and accustomed to obey orders, but men observing certain standards of conduct, possessing a pride of service and an *esprit de corps*. These standards proved very elastic, it is true, for a few years in the mid-eighteenth century. But the very consequences of this laxity served to prove the value of the Company's civil discipline as a whole. The Company could not have survived if the conditions of the early sixties had not been corrected; it was the restoration and reinforcement of this discipline which made possible the British supremacy of the nineteenth century. It should not be thought that civil discipline can be achieved merely by grading ranks and paying regular cash salaries. Until the time of Cornwallis the cash salaries of the Company's servants were negligible. There must not only be a recognized superior capable of enforcing its orders, but a body of standards and principles

whose authority is recognized by all in some degree. Civil discipline must have a moral content as well as an effective legal sanction. In this the Company's servants were strong, for they carried with them English law as well as English commercialism, and English patriotism as well as individualism.

But without resources in money as well as men the British could not have succeeded even with the help of civil and military discipline, and of naval and military superiority. They might have gone no farther than the Portuguese in the sixteenth century or the Dutch of our own day. There is a limit to the achievements of the disciplined administrator as of the disciplined soldier. But what the British lacked in men they made up in financial resources, which enabled them to replace losses with equanimity and to attract and maintain Indian auxiliaries with regularity. For those, and they were many, whose rule was to be true to their salt, there was an adequate supply to be true to. The chronic embarrassment of the eighteenth-century Indian statesman was lack of means. Governments oppressed their peasantry not of choice but from necessity. The Marathas were 'rapacious' because their natural resources were meagre. Armies marched and countermarched as often to collect revenue as to defeat the foe; before a general could plan a battle he had first to forestall a mutiny. In consequence the British possessed a cohesion and resilience which first astonished and then depressed their Indian contemporaries. The legend of British invincibility was built up on an ability to replace losses and to pay troops regularly. The British could do this because during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they enjoyed an expanding economy based on developing trade which provided surplus resources. This development was accelerated by the onset of the Industrial Revolution, but it was well in train before. Akbar's revenue in 1605 was stated from official accounts to be about £17,500,000;[1] the Company's gross revenue in 1792 was £8,225,000 from a smaller area exhausted by war.[2] Added to the contrast of military and civil techniques was the disparity of economic systems. India, with her agricultural subsistence economy could not compete with the commercialism of the West. Britain, for all her paucity of numbers, was in fact stronger in resources than any one Indian power and equal to all of them put together. When it is remembered that the Indian powers never were united, the success of the British ceases to seem either extraordinary or unaccountable.

A final factor in the British success was the nature of their objectives. There was no head-on collision between British imperialism and Indian society, and in consequence there was no resistance *à outrance* or to the death. Indian society, whether in its Hindu or Muslim forms, was centred round religio-social systems which showed little trace of

[1] De Laet's computation. See V. Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul*, 2nd ed., p. 379. The rupee was probably worth rather more than two shillings.

[2] From returns of gross revenue, printed by order of the House of Commons, 22 June 1855. R. Dutt, *Economic History of India*, 5th ed., i. 399.

political nationalism in its modern sense. The affections of the people were fastened upon social and religious ideals rather than upon political freedom. Freedom for the Hindu was a matter of inner release, for the Muslim of freedom to worship the true God in the right way. No doubt both Hindu and Muslim preferred their own rulers to others but what both would die for was their religious ideals and social patterns. The Mughul empire was accepted by Hindus as long as it was both tolerant and strong. The Portuguese made no headway in India because they attacked both parties where they felt most deeply, in the religious sphere. The British came for trade and went into politics to preserve their trade. They eschewed religion. So to the Hindu they were preferable to the Muslim and to the Muslim more acceptable than the Hindu. And this was the case in spite of general dislike of most British customs and many British individuals. The British attack was a glancing blow which left the vital centres of Indian life untouched. Religious toleration and social non-interference were more powerful weapons than the rupees of the Company or the guns of its troops.

The British period is now a completed whole and can be viewed with more detachment and balance than was possible before 1947. We see it now, not, as did nineteenth-century historians, as the consummation to which all Indian history had been moving, but as one episode among many in the long story of India. But this does not deprive it of significance. In one sense it is true, it represents one more example of an alien domination which blossomed, bloomed, and faded as others had done before it. But the incompleteness of such a view can be seen the moment the India of 1947 is compared with that of 1757. The India which saw the British depart differed far more from the India which saw the conquest of Bengal than the India of Plassey differed from the India of Babur or Alberuni. At first the rise of the British dominion bore a recognizable resemblance to the rise of the Mughul empire. A sensational start was followed by setbacks and a period of uncertainty and confused politics, and this in turn was succeeded by a rapid consolidation of power in the hands of masterful leaders. The reunited India of 1818 could be compared in many ways with the northern India of Akbar's later years. The old life was restored under a new imperial umbrella. The new rulers, it is true, were more alien than the former ones; their habits were more strange, their manners more aloof, their arrogance more marked. But then something happened. The new rulers reorganized the country more efficiently than before; they were self-consciously tolerant; they studied to preserve rather than destroy. But almost in spite of themselves new thoughts, new ideas, and new ways of life came into the country, with results which have proved incalculable in their range and depth. It is here that we can find the significance of the British connexion with India. The British were the harbingers of the West. At times unconsciously, at times with optimistic zeal, and at times with reluctance or dislike, they were the vehicles of western influence in India. That is why their

influence in India has proved creative, and why their period will be looked back on as formative for the India that is yet to be. The British provided the bridge for India to pass from the medieval world of the Mughuls to the new age of science and humanism.

While Britain's supreme function has been that of a cultural germ carrier, this has by no means been her only significant work. Britain's first achievement was the restoration of the unity of India and the re-establishment of order. Though in themselves operations which may be called mechanical, they were necessary preliminaries for all that was to follow. The introduction of the English language provided a vehicle for western ideas, and English law a standard of British practice. Along with English literature came western moral and religious ideas, and the admission of missionaries provided, as it were, a working model of western moral precepts. In the economic sphere again, the British played the part of 'carriers'. They were the agents for the entry of the new machine age into India, and their provision of a railway system provided the nervous system of the country's new economic life. If they were responsible for the decay of the old handicrafts, they made possible the development of mechanized industry and brought India within the orbit of the new world economy. In the British period it became clear that India would not go wholly western; the years since independence have made it clear that she will not remain wholly eastern. Whatever the final form assumed by Indian culture, it will be original and significant and the process which led to it will have been deeply influenced by the British.

In 1740 all such developments were far in the future. India was not yet aware that an age was coming to an end. In the north the Mughul empire, though shaken by Nadir Shah's incursion of the previous year, was still a going concern. Nadir Shah's advance to Delhi had been a large-scale raid rather than a regular invasion, and as such it had been less destructive and less dislocating in its effects. In fact the Mughul government appeared to have recovered a measure of stability in the north after the dissensions and confusions of the second decade of the century. In thirteen years there had been four outbreaks of full-scale civil war; this was not to recur for another twelve years. Though Kabul was lost, the Panjab, Sindh, and Kashmir were firmly held and so were Gujarat and the Ganges valley to the Bay of Bengal. Bengal itself, though semi-independent, still acknowledged the emperor and sent him tribute. The Rajput states were quiescent. The Mughul government still presented an imposing front to the world, and only close observers suspected how far the inevitable dry rot of decay had advanced. Short-sighted opportunism had taken the place of statesmanship; compromise of leadership; loyalty to the emperor was giving ground to personal ambitions and no new principle had appeared to take its place. The troubles of the north-west were drying up the stream of recruits whose fortunes depended upon imperial favour and whose vigour helped to sustain its burdens.

Farther south the picture was less favourable. The Deccan provinces of the empire had become separated from the main body under Āsaf Jāh, the first Nizam and last of Aurangzeb's officers. The Maratha tide was flowing through the gap across central India threatening Gujarat and the Rajputs to the north and west, Bengal and Orissa to the east. Hyderabad itself was threatened on two sides. Maratha methods of swift raids, indiscriminate plunder, and quick withdrawals proved crippling to the countryside, and their levy of *chauth* or one-fourth of the revenue, as the price of immunity, ruinous to the finances. The whole Deccan was in the grip of a slow economic strangulation, which had begun with Aurangzeb's campaigns with their destruction of the natural political breakwaters of the Deccan kingdoms.

On the west the Maratha power was centred in Poona, the seat of the Peshwa. Though the limits of Maratha authority were but vaguely defined, and the mechanism of government but loosely integrated, the Peshwa's writ ran throughout the Maratha dominions. There was still a Maratha empire rather than a Maratha confederacy. The Maratha power was visibly growing and constituted, on the Indian side, the one dynamic factor in an otherwise apparently static situation. But the Marathas, though plainly confident and aggressive, were not yet clearly imperially minded. They were a threat to the Mughul supremacy rather than a rival for the Mughul dominion.

South of the Kistna the coastal province of the Carnatic extended to the Maratha principality of Tanjore. This was a dependency of the Nizam who maintained his authority until his death in 1748. The coast of Malabar was still largely cut off from the rest of India by the tangle of tropical jungle and hill which constitutes the Western Ghats; here the Zamorin of Calicut still ruled, while the extreme south was shared between the Rajas of Cochin and Travancore. Malabar was no longer the exchange centre for the spice trade between East and West, for the spice ships from the East Indies by-passed it on their way to the Cape and Europe, while the newer trade in cloths, dyes, and saltpetre was centred elsewhere. Only a restricted and local trade in spices survived, controlled by a number of subordinate European factories. Between Malabar and the Carnatic lay the Hindu state of Mysore, which had achieved a modest modicum of power on the ruins of the Vijayanagar empire and through the vicissitudes of Mughul-Maratha wars. But it lacked native vigour and would only achieve a brief glory under alien leaders.

To complete the picture we must add the European factories and settlements. Portuguese Goa was a museum of sixteenth-century imperialism, more plentifully supplied with churches than trade and with monks than soldiers. Bombay was a British possession but as yet the heir-apparent rather than actual successor to the wealth of Surat. The British settlements of Madras and Calcutta were prosperous and populous but centres of trade rather than of political power. French Pondicherry fulfilled the same function to a lesser degree. Other European

stations, such as French Chandernagar, Dutch Chinsura and Negapatam, and Danish Tranquebar, were trading-posts without political significance.

Foreign trade was active and profitable, but it must be remembered that it formed but a fraction of India's whole economic life. The products of the interior could only reach the seaports in bulk where good communications existed, and these at that time consisted of river lines. In general the economic life of India was stagnant or in decline. There was little productive expenditure because the surplus revenue in the country was absorbed by the cost of military operations. Production was actually decreasing because of the wide extent of these same operations, of the insecurity they created, and the devastation they wrought. The general standard of life was falling for the same reason. There was increasing concentration on the effort to keep things as they were rather than on improvement or development. In the later years of Aurangzeb men looked back with regret upon the spacious days of Shahjahan; by 1740 it was Aurangzeb's time to which men looked back and the survivors of his reign, like the Nizam-ul-Mulk who were regarded as the surviving giants of a greater age.

The general cultural life of the country shared in the general malaise. The promotion of culture depended largely upon patronage, and great men were too occupied with power politics and the problem of survival to have much time or means to encourage the arts. There was little growth and a general slow decay. Mughul building showed a continuance of the same ideas with decreasing means and a gradually deteriorating taste. Compare, for example, Safdar Jang's tomb in Delhi (1756) with the Jama Masjid 100 years earlier. Master masons and craftsmen were still to be found but they lacked adequate support or intelligent direction. The same was true of painting. Exquisite work could still be done, but patronage was erratic and the flashes of brilliance transitory. Hindu art suffered equally with the Muslim from the inhibitions of expense and neglect. Only in the extreme south did the tradition of great building linger and in the deserts and hills of the north that of tasteful painting continue. In intellectual and religious life the same conditions prevailed. Islam had its learned men but no new school of thought. No new philosophic system and no new religious cult like the *bhakti* movements of the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries appeared within Hinduism. Syncretistic movements like that of Guru Nānak, the founder of Sikhism, or the *Kabirpanthis*, the followers of Kabir, had either developed into military bodies whose sword was their creed or become bodies of quietists in the process of being transmuted into new castes. Indeed, the one sign of positive development in this field was the tendency of ascetics to develop into military bands. Groups of armed ascetics, valiant for their Lord, roamed and often terrorized the countryside, specially in the north.

Social life shared in the general restriction of society. Those features of Hindu life which tended to decline or be discouraged in settled

periods were increasingly in evidence. Suttee, frowned upon by the Mughuls, revived as their power declined. Infanticide was encouraged by economic stringency as security diminished. Such customs as *purdah* or female 'seclusion' tended to increase among Hindus as well as Muslims for the same reason. Education, beyond the rudiments of letters, and the cultivation of the arts, became more and more confined to the great and then mainly to their youth. India, in nearly all the departments of life, was increasingly living upon its past. There was a lack of purpose and vigour in the cultural field, of hope and enterprise in the economic sphere, while in public affairs there was a bewildering array of cross purposes. There was energy, ability, and intellect in abundance, but they were directed to mutually contradictory ends or wasted in sterile endeavours. In Chinese phrase the signs were many that for the Mughuls in India the Mandate of Heaven was exhausted.

AUTHORITIES

JAMES MILL's *History of British India* (1817), completed by H. H. Wilson to 1835 (1840), remains outstanding among the old general histories, for all its one-sidedness and occasional wrongheadedness, though it has not lived up to Macaulay's comparison with Gibbon. Smaller works of this class are the histories by E. THORNTON, J. C. MARSHMAN, and W. BEVERIDGE. The outstanding general modern work is the *Cambridge History of India*, vols. v and vi (1929 and 1932), edited by H. H. Dodwell, which, though uneven in quality and unbalanced in planning, is in general authoritative and contains exhaustive bibliographies. Its best chapters deal with the eighteenth century and with administration. Amongst the smaller general histories may be mentioned P. E. ROBERTS, *History of British India* (3rd ed., 1952), a balanced and scholarly survey, E. THOMPSON and G. T. GARRETT, *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India*, 1934, a sensitive and nervous study, giving more attention to economic and cultural aspects and the rise of Indian nationalism, and Sir A. LYALL, *Rise of the British Dominion in India* (3rd ed., 1896), a fair-minded imperialist interpretation. The cultural aspect is dealt with in the co-operative work *Modern India and the West* (1941), edited by L. S. S. O'MALLEY. The same author has written a history of the Indian civil service, whose work has also been described by P. WOODRUFF in *The Men who ruled India* (2 vols., 1953–4). There is as yet no modern economic history of India. R. C. DUTT's two volumes are now fifty years old and V. ANSTEY, *Economic Development of India* (3rd imp., 1949), is a study rather than a history. An Indian survey of the period is to be found in Part III of an *Advanced History of India* by R. C. MAJUMDAR, H. C. RAYCHAUDHURI, and K. K. DATTA (1946). An original and challenging Indian interpretation of the British period is to be found in K. M. PANIKKAR, *Asia and Western Dominance* (1953). Finally may be mentioned the Rulers of India series (29 vols.) which, though old, still contains much material of value, and W. W. HUNTER, *Gazetteer of India*, including the first four general volumes, which remains an invaluable work of reference. For detailed references to parliamentary papers, &c., and manuscript sources the reader should consult the *Cambridge History of India* and for treaties, &c., see Sir C. V. AITCHESON, *Treaties, Sanads*, &c. (14 vols., ed. 1931).

BOOK I

The Rise of the British Dominion, 1740–1818

CHAPTER 1

English and French

THE force which precipitated the new age in India was quite unconnected with that country itself. In 1740 the Emperor Charles VI died, and according to the Pragmatic Sanction agreed upon by most of the European powers, his daughter Maria Theresa succeeded to his hereditary dominions in Austria and elsewhere. But Frederick, the newly acceded King of Prussia, thought the moment opportune to seize the coveted province of Silesia and marched in October 1740. The surprised Hapsburgs proved more resilient than expected and the result was the War of the Austrian Succession, not to be concluded by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle until 1748. The act which inaugurated *real-politik* in Europe introduced a new age in India. France supported Prussia, and Britain, already involved in a colonial war with Spain in the War of Jenkins' ear, was at war with France in 1742. Colonial rivalry with the twin Bourbon powers reinforced considerations of the Balance of Power in Europe to make such a decision inevitable. Since Britain and France had important positions and interests in India, this conflict naturally spread thither. In former wars, it is true, the two Companies had agreed upon neutrality, but then the French were too weak to excite much jealousy, nor were they in a position to send great armaments to the East. But now their Indian trade formed an important part of French colonial interests and these were, in the eighteenth century, the main cause of rivalry between the two countries. So while the French, being the weaker party, offered to continue the neutral tradition, the British declined.

The position of the English Company had outwardly changed but little since the union of the old and new Companies in 1709. It was organized into the three independent Presidencies of Bombay, Fort St. George in Madras, and Fort William in Bengal. Surat was subordinate to Bombay (from 1709) and Fort St. David to Madras. Bombay had been a British possession since 1662 and possessed a dockyard (controlled by a succession of Parsis). Both Madras and Calcutta were

settlements which had grown up round the nucleus of a fortified factory, and the status of both was regulated by the result of Surman's embassy to Delhi from 1714 to 1717. Attached to each settlement were a number of satellite factories, like those of Patna, Dacca, and Kasimbazar in Bengal, Vizagapatam and Cuddalore to Madras, and the Gujarat and Malabar factories to Bombay. All these presidencies were the sites of substantial Indian cities. The population of Bombay was rising steadily and had reached 70,000 by 1744; that of Calcutta was about 100,000, while Madras, for long the leading settlement, had contained about 300,000 inhabitants since the beginning of the century. The Company had enjoyed a steady prosperity since 1709 based on an increasing turnover but limited by its subordinate position in a still powerful empire. Its position was further strengthened by the extension of its trade to China. From the time of the union of the companies its dividends had never dropped below 7 or exceeded 10 per cent. Its trade was chiefly in indigo (from Gujarat and Bengal), saltpetre (from Bengal and Bihar), spices from Malabar, and cotton goods of all kinds. The Company's servants supported themselves by private trade within India and overseas trade eastwards, and this again being limited by local conditions was steady rather than sensational. The time for dazzling profits was not yet.

Compared to this story of solid prosperity the history of the French Company had been modest and chequered. The French first turned their eyes eastwards in the time of Henry IV, when France, like England and the Netherlands, was hostile to a Spain which had absorbed Portugal and her eastern possessions. But their first efforts were exploratory and the trading sequels abortive. It was not until the genius of Colbert looked eastwards that the *Compagnie des Indes Orientales* was formed in 1664. In 1674 the settlement of Pondicherry on the Coromandel coast was secured, but the Company's fortunes languished during Louis XIV's European wars. A succession of prudent heads and a reorganization in 1723 wrought a transformation; by 1740 the Company could challenge comparison though not parity with the English. Pondicherry had been fortified and subordinate stations opened at Chandernagar in Bengal, Masulipatam on the Coromandel coast, and in Malabar. French India was backed by the French possessions of Mauritius (the Isle de France) and Réunion (the Isle de Bourbon) in the southern Indian Ocean; Colbert's political curiosity (which helped to inspire the reports of Bernier) had long been forgotten, and the French Company was as peaceful in intent and as commercial in outlook as the English.

Compared to the English East India Company the French enterprise was a mushroom growth. Though its strength was substantial it was by no means equal to that of its prospective rivals. The English Company had three well-established seats of power in India, one of which possessed a dockyard and excellent harbour; the French had only one on the exposed Coromandel shore. The French had a harbour and sea

base at Mauritius (their headquarters) but this was distant and ill supplied with stores. The British were more than compensated by the possession of Bombay, their copious mercantile marine and their naval power. Though both Companies were prosperous the French volume of trade was much less and their resources correspondingly weaker. The value of French exports from India increased between 1728 and 1740 nearly ten times,[1] but in the same year British imports from India were more than twice as great.[2] To the advantage of finance the English Company added those of unified direction by an independent mercantile corporation, itself backed by important interests in the city of London. It possessed long traditions and much experience; it could call on capital and make its influence felt in Parliament. The French Company on the other hand owed its existence largely to state action; its resuscitation in 1723 left it with twelve directors and four inspectors nominated by the Crown and only eight syndics to represent the shareholders. It was essentially a state enterprise whose fortunes depended upon the attention or neglect of ministers. Both companies depended upon the sea link with Europe, and here again the British held the lead. The result of a conflict must depend in the last resort upon seapower and British naval power was not only greater than the French but backed by growing resources. Only in the matter of leadership were the French unquestionably superior. Lenoir and Dumas had built up the Company and in Dupleix they were to find one of those superior minds whose insight clarifies the issues of politics and whose activity often determines them.

In 1740 the political scene in south India was uncertain and confused. The Nizam Āsaf Jāh, the last representative of the Aurangzeb school of public duty and integrity, was old and fully occupied by the rising Maratha power in the western Deccan; his subordinates were already speculating upon the consequences of his death. South of the mass of the Hyderabad territory with its coastal Coromandel strip lay no powerful Hindu state to maintain a balance of power. Instead there existed in the interior Mysore, the ghost of the old Vijayanagar empire, on the west coast the Malabar states with Cochin and Travancore, and on the east the principalities of Trichinopoly, Madura, and Tanjore. The age and preoccupations of the Nizam encouraged ambition, and the weakness of the Hindu states invited attack. Thus the last flickers of Muslim expansionism united with the first signs of Hyderabad decline to set the stage for the plans of adventurers. There was one other factor in the situation, the Marathas. The Tanjore kingdom had a Maratha raja, a relic of the Maratha invasion of the south (in Aurangzeb's time); the existence of this state, together with the claim to *chauth* or one-fourth of the revenue, dating from the same period, gave the Peshwa of Poona an excuse for interference whenever it suited him.

The Nawab of the Carnatic, Dost Ali, busied himself with expansion in preparation for a bid for independence on the Nizam's death. First

[1] From £89,000 to £880,000. [2] £1,795,000.

THE CARNATIC

Trichinopoly and then Madura fell to his son Safdar Ali and his son-in-law Chanda Sahib. But attacks on Maratha Tanjore were less successful. In 1740 and 1741 the Marathas moved down from the north; Dost Ali was killed, Trichinopoly taken, and Chanda Sahib captured. Safdar Ali succeeded his father only to be murdered by his cousin Murtaza Ali in late 1742. At this point the Nizam intervened, retook Trichinopoly, and replaced Murtaza by an officer of his own, Anwar-ud-din Khan, early in 1743. This was the situation on the eve of European intervention in south Indian affairs. The new Nawab of the Carnatic was but insecurely seated in his government, and was beset by partisans of the displaced family. In the background hovered the two great powers of the Nizam and the Marathas, powerful enough to intervene but too preoccupied to sustain their agents continuously. 'The whole country was in a state of uncertainty, expecting some great event, though none knew what.'

When news of the outbreak of war arrived late in 1742 Dupleix had just become Governor of Pondicherry. For the moment he was powerless because the French fleet had been recalled; in accordance with the French directors' wishes he proposed neutrality to the three English presidencies, but even though the English merchants would have welcomed it, such an understanding could not bind the king's ships on either side and so the war was joined. The War of the Austrian Succession in India depended entirely upon sea-power. Besides Dupleix the French possessed another leader of genius in La Bourdonnais, the Governor of Mauritius. In the absence of a French naval squadron he improvised a fleet of French Indiamen and country craft, manned them partly with local sailors, and sailed for the Coromandel coast. There he met the British fleet whose commander Barnett had been succeeded by the unenterprising Peyton. An indecisive action in June 1746 led both sides to port to refit, Peyton to Ceylon and La Bourdonnais to Pondicherry. On his return Peyton was so impressed by the appearance of the French that he retired to the Hugli, thus leaving the way open for an attack on Madras. Madras was in no condition, physically or morally, to stand a siege and capitulated within a week on 21 September. The French had achieved a great and unexpected success, but the effect was spoilt by the quarrel which immediately ensued between their leaders. La Bourdonnais was disposed to ransom the town which would have excluded Dupleix and his friends from any share of the profits. The quarrel was unsettled when a storm in early October dispersed La Bourdonnais's squadron, whereupon Dupleix seized and plundered the town.

Dupleix now tried to complete the elimination of the British by the capture of Fort St. David. But his efforts were rendered fruitless by the return of a British fleet under Griffin. In mid-1748 British reinforcements intended for the recovery of Madras arrived with a new fleet under Boscawen. Pondicherry in its turn was besieged, but once more French enterprise was aided by British ineptitude in securing a French success. Before the see-saw could change again came news of

the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. Madras was restored to the British in exchange for Cape Breton Island in America and outwardly the *status quo* was restored.

But the restoration concealed a profound change in the politics of south India. The British now held Madras by European treaty and soon obtained release of the old quit-rent of 1,200 pagodas a year from one of the rival nawabs. The French had acquired a high reputation for enterprise and military skill, and had been strengthened in a military sense by detachments of La Bourdonnais's fleet which had been left behind when the admiral left. Thirdly, the Nawab of the Carnatic had been unable to intervene effectively. This was not for want of appeals from the Europeans or inclination on his part. Both sides had in fact appealed to him when it suited them, Dupleix against the British navy and the British against the French attack on Madras. The nawab responded with surprising promptitude, but his troops arrived to find Madras in French hands. Skirmishes before its walls and on the Adyar provided the first concrete evidence of that greatly increased superiority of European arms and tactics which was to prove decisive in Indian politics during the next fifty years.

There followed Dupleix's bold bid for south Indian empire. If circumstances favoured the man, here was a man fitted to make the most of circumstances. Like Clive, Dupleix began his career in commercial service. But unlike Clive, he did not find fame in deserting the counting-house for the field. He rose regularly in the French Company's service and reached Pondicherry by promotion from Chandernagar. His genius was diplomatic and political rather than military. A supple mind and an active imagination easily converted a skilful merchant into a subtle politician. But Dupleix was more than a politician. He possessed that insight of statesmanship which can divine a change in the balance of political forces when it is actually taking place rather than years later, when it has become obvious to all. It was this quality which enabled him to penetrate the inherent weakness of the south Indian political system and the consequent decisive importance of the tiny European forces in the country. In the Indian politics of the time all was policy, power politics, and personal ambition; there was no emotional bar, such as patriotism might have provided, against invoking the help of the foreigner. Consequently interference could be freely indulged in, and the technical advantages enjoyed by the European would bring victory to whichever side they were given. In the absence of conviction, of national and religious feeling, politics were a matter for lords and their followers; the longest-ranged guns, the quickest-firing musket, the steadiest soldiers would decide the issue. The makeweight had become the balance, the client could become the master.

Dupleix is thus described by Ananda Ranga Pillai, for many years his *dubash* or secretary. Dupleix's

> method of doing things is not known to anyone, because none else is possessed of the quick mind with which he is gifted. In patience he has no equal. He

has peculiar skill in carrying out his plans and designs in the management of affairs and in governing; in fitting his advice to times and persons; in maintaining at all times an even countenance; in doing things through proper agents; in addressing them in appropriate terms; and in assuming a bearing at once dignified towards all.

His faults were those of an over-sanguine temperament, which led him to hope too often and too long to snatch advantages from critical situations, and of an intelligence which relied too much on artifice in dealing with opponents. His love of display impressed and endeared him to the south Indians, but his autocratic temper made it difficult for him to work with equals and was a fruitful source of quarrels. Dupleix dazzled but he also divided. He left no school to continue his work, but only a void place which no one could fill. His impact was that of the flood which destroys rather than the rain which fertilizes.

The essence of Dupleix's policy lay in using his diplomatic skill and military advantages to secure a local Indian authority amenable to himself. By this means he would satisfy the French Company by ruining British trade, and by making the Indian authorities dependent on himself he would become the *de facto* ruler of south India. The French Company, like its British counterpart in the time of Wellesley, had no other wish than for a quiet life, but as later, their doubts for a time were silenced by the brilliance of their agent's success. Events played into Dupleix's hands at the moment of the signing of the peace. The aged Nizam died in 1748 and was succeeded by his second son, Nasir Jang. But the succession was disputed by a grandson in the person of Muzaffar Jang. At the same moment Chanda Sahib was released by the Marathas and appeared in the Carnatic with their support. Dupleix supported both claimants and provided the help which secured the defeat and death of Anwar-ud-din Khan at Ambur near Vellore in August 1749. Anwar's son Muhammad Ali retired to Trichinopoly, where in October the British began to send him help. The Madras government had already interfered in Tanjore politics a few months before, but it was their October action which really cast the die for their large-scale interference in Indian affairs.

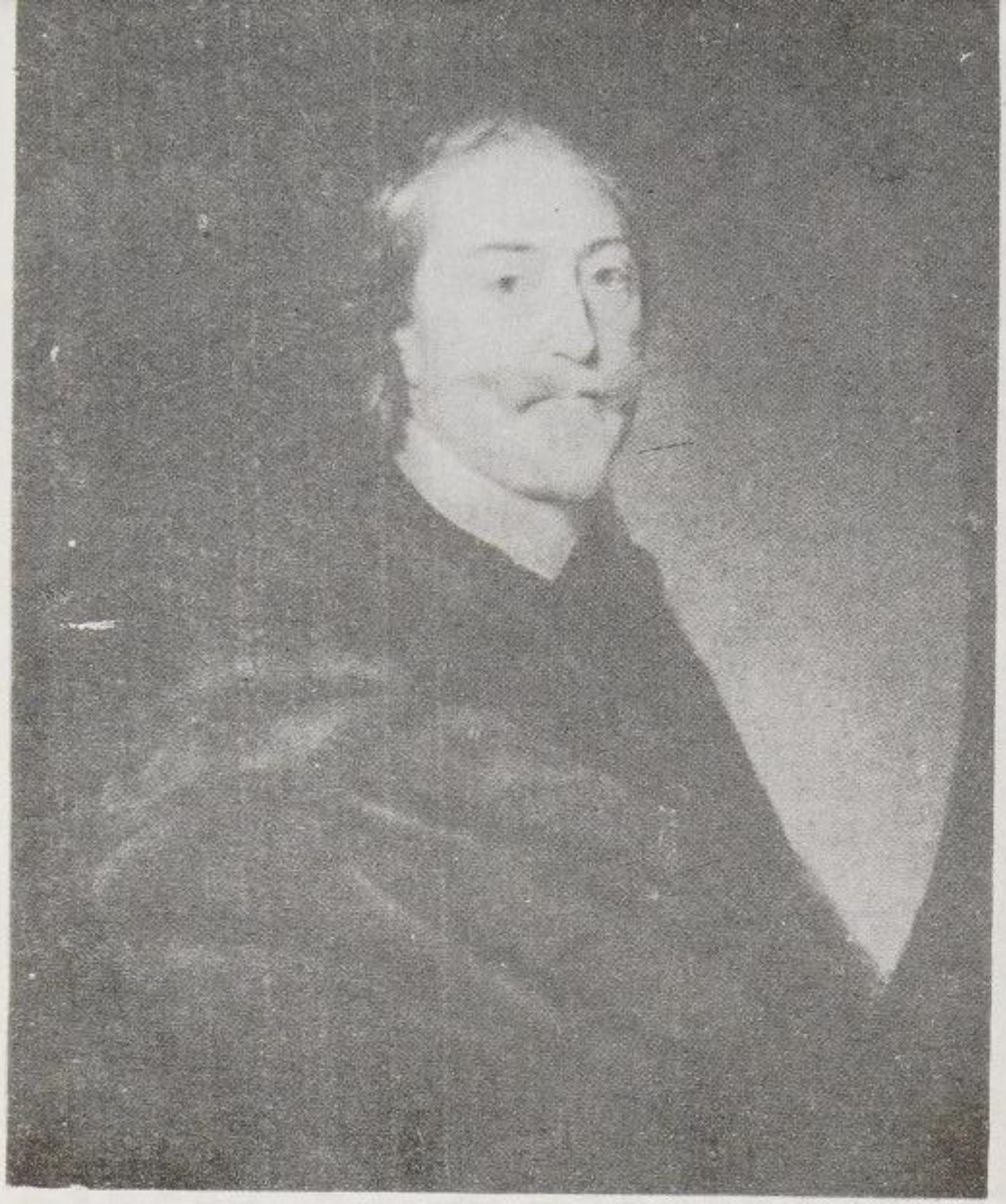
Muzaffar Jang was now confronted with the full forces of Nasir Jang, who spent most of 1750 in the Carnatic. Muzaffar submitted and Dupleix prepared to make an agreement when Nasir was assassinated. Dexterously turning these events to his advantage Dupleix secured the recognition of Muzaffar as Nizam, sending Bussy with a French force to support him in Hyderabad, and receiving in return large grants and a vague title as ruler of India south of the Kistna.[1] Muzaffar was shortly killed in his turn, but Bussy's force secured the accession of Salabat Jang and maintained him in power. The Nizam was henceforward dependent on the French. Dupleix was now at the height of his fame, and free to complete his designs in the Carnatic.

[1] This was a title rather than an office, which superseded neither the rulers of Madura, Tanjore, or Mysore, nor even Chanda Sahib as governor of the Carnatic.

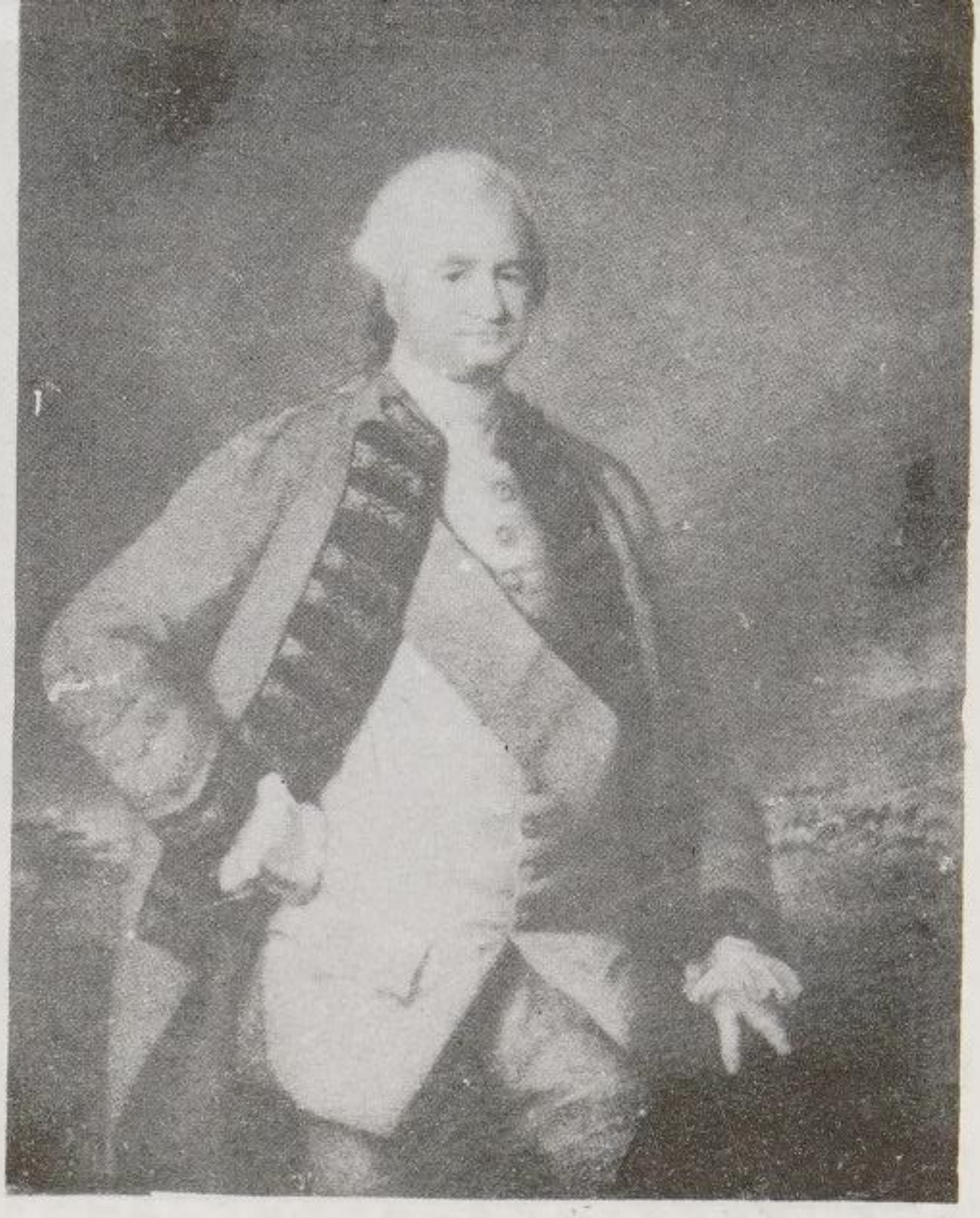
The only remaining obstacles were the British in Madras and Muhammad Ali in Trichinopoly. The first clash occurred with a British force under Gingens sent to strengthen Muhammad Ali. From this moment Dupleix's fortune began to wane. The French arrived before Trichinopoly in September 1751, but meanwhile Clive had created a diversion by seizing the capital city of Arcot in August with 210 men. The famous siege of fifty days in September and October divided the French efforts and gave Muhammad Ali time to procure allies. Mysore, Tanjore, and the Maratha chief Morari Rao restored the balance of forces of which the generalship of Clive and Stringer Lawrence took full advantage. Trichinopoly was first relieved and the French general Law with Chanda Sahib was then cooped up in the island of Srirangam and forced to surrender in June 1752. Chanda Sahib was executed by Muhammad Ali, his British allies failing to intervene. Dupleix refused to admit defeat and with infinite resource continued the struggle. He even besieged Trichinopoly a second time in 1753. But early in 1754 he was obliged to open negotiations with the British and meanwhile the French Company had decided upon his recall. Godeheu, a director of the Company, was sent out in August to supersede Dupleix and restore peace. The French retained their territorial possessions and their special position in Hyderabad, but their bid to control the Carnatic and rival the British had failed. What was in theory another practical restoration of the *status quo* did not, however, leave things as they were. The British had greatly strengthened both their position and reputation in the south and the French legend of superiority had been discredited. Above all, the relative positions of European and Indian powers in the south had been reversed. Both European nations had intervened actively in Indian politics; it had become evident that the countenance of Indian authority was no longer necessary for European success; rather Indian authority itself was becoming dependent on European support. Muhammad Ali in the Carnatic and Salabat Jang in Hyderabad were both clients rather than patrons.

Dupleix no doubt suffered from misfortune. Except for Bussy he was generally ill-served by his military lieutenants, and he had to contend with talent in the person of Lawrence and genius in that of Clive. But the causes of his failure lay deeper than this. It was rather his early success which should excite our wonder than his later failure. His system was unsupported from home and in consequence depended upon constant success in order to silence the criticism of the French directors. Success required not only the defeat of the British but the management of the ever-changing politics of south India. As soon as it was seen that the British could withstand the French, his south Indian allies broke into disarray. Above all, Dupleix lacked the financial resources to sustain a long campaign and satisfy his allies. Dupleix's bid for power was a *tour de force* which was bound to fail as soon as the real limitations of his resources came to be realized.

The French enjoyed but a brief respite before the third and decisive



a. Sir Thomas Roe



b. Clive

PLATE I

PLATE 2

Warren Hastings (Old Age)

phase of the Anglo-French struggle commenced. The Seven Years War broke out in Europe in 1756. Its cause was the Austrian desire to recover Silesia, but though this time the alignment of the powers was different, Britain and France were again on opposite sides. At the time neither side in south India was in a position to renew the struggle. The French Company was still exhausted and discredited. Clive had returned to Madras in 1755 with a plan to attack Bussy in Hyderabad. This had been delayed on account of Bombay's failure to co-operate, and the Company's disaster in Bengal had then called him away to the north. The French could do nothing until reinforcements arrived, and this gave time for Clive to consolidate his position in Bengal whence he could send to Madras, if not men, the no less necessary financial resources. In a sense the war was lost for the French before it began. Since both sides were supported from Europe, sea-power again became vital. The French had to control both elements if they were to succeed.

The main French armament arrived early in 1758 convoyed by a fleet under d'Aché. Its leader was the Comte de Lally, a brave but headstrong soldier, who was bold when he should have been cautious and cautious when he should have been bold. He was armed with full powers, being both governor and commander-in-chief. But he was unable to inspire loyalty in his subordinates, and above all proved unable to work with the experienced and sagacious Bussy. At first all went well. An indecisive action between d'Aché and Pocock had the result of leaving the coast clear of British ships. Lally marched at once to Fort St. David which he took much sooner than expected, on 2 June. His next step should have been to attack Madras, but here his troubles began. Pocock reappeared on the coast and d'Aché declined to meet him. Lally must wait for the change of season before Madras would be clear of British ships and he resolved to use the time by extorting an old debt from the Raja of Tanjore. He impetuously marched ahead of his artillery and supplies so that he could only sit down before Tanjore when he arrived; he terrorized the countryside by the execution of six temple Brahmans so that he could not obtain supplies; finally he raised the siege on hearing of the defeat of d'Aché off Karikal. The monsoon season now drew on, and Lally prepared to besiege Madras. But Governor Pigot and Colonel Lawrence had used their respite to good effect. The resolute defence of the two from October 1758 to March 1759 redeemed its former feeble showing. Lally was still hesitating to storm a difficult breach when a squadron of British ships appeared. Lally then raised the siege, leaving his military reputation behind in the trenches.

At the same time the French suffered another blow. Lally had recalled Bussy from Hyderabad, but on second thoughts had allowed the French garrison in the Northern Sarkars to remain. As a way of helping Madras without losing control of his troops Clive sent Colonel Forde to Vizagapatam in the autumn of 1758. While Lally was before Madras Forde defeated the French, and before he could march north

had captured Masulipatam and made peace with the Nizam. Forde returned to Calcutta in October 1759, having safeguarded Bengal, but Lally had lost a body of veteran troops seasoned in Indian warfare. The whole episode is a good example of the way in which the correct use of sea-power can double the striking power of an army. The campaign dragged on without decisive result until the arrival of Coote with reinforcements. In January 1760 Lally was decisively defeated by Coote at Wandiwash, Bussy being taken prisoner. There only remained the reduction of Pondicherry. After eight months of blockade, endured gallantly but in an atmosphere tense with recrimination, Lally surrendered on 16 January 1761.[1] The French power in India was at an end.

The defeat of the French was partly due to the character of Lally. His impetuosity, his inability to work with colleagues or to inspire confidence among the civilians undermined the morale of the French; his errors of judgement and his failure to understand or conciliate the local population were equally costly. But behind these personal faults lay the two factors of sea and financial power. Lally could not recover after Wandiwash because he had no finance; he had no finance because he could get no supplies from France. The British, on the other hand, could feed Madras from Bengal as well as supply it from home, and by moving their men in ships they could make one man do the work of two. Lally blundered, but without the aid of sea-power he would not have been destroyed.

French power in India was never again formidable. Pondicherry was restored at the conclusion of peace in 1763, but as an open town. For a moment the sea victories of de Suffren in 1782–3 promised a revival of French power, but peace came before any advantage could be taken of them. French influence remained but it was confined to individuals and backed by no fleets or armies. Raymond at Hyderabad, de Boigne and Perron with Sindia worried but did not seriously menace the British. For a time the spectre of Napoleonic invasion exercised the mind of Lord Minto, but the Moscow campaign ended for ever the French dream of empire in India.

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[1] On his return to France Lally was tried for treason and executed.

CHAPTER 2

The British in Bengal

THE East India Company first established a factory in Bengal in the year 1650–1. A flourishing trade soon developed. The ill-advised attempt of the Company to free itself from Mughul control in 1686 by taking Chittagong ended in the founding of Calcutta by Job Charnock in 1690 on the swamp-girdled site of Sutanati. A local rebellion provided a pretext for fortifying the factory in 1696 and four years later it became the seat of a presidency under the name of Fort William in Bengal. Though the last of the three main centres of British trade to be established, the British establishments in Bengal soon became some of the most lucrative and important. They tapped a richer and extensive hinterland provided with excellent communications by water, and furnished with goods in rising demand in Europe. There was not only a flourishing trade in cotton goods, silk goods and yarn, and sugar, but also in saltpetre, for which the constant wars in Europe furnished a steadily growing demand. Bengal was less disturbed by war than Madras or Bombay or Surat, and felt the effects of the weakening of imperial authority later. In 1717 Surman's embassy to the court of Farrukhsiyar achieved a signal diplomatic success. Imperial *farmans* granted free trade to the Company in Bengal, subject to an annual payment of Rs. 3,000, and in the Hyderabad lands, subject to a quit-rent for Madras; more land around Calcutta was rented and the right of settlement in the interior accorded; all dues at Surat were commuted for an annual payment of Rs. 10,000; and free currency was granted to the Company's rupees which were minted in Bombay. These arrangements governed the Company's relations with the empire for the next forty years. But as the imperial authority declined, the Company's officials were increasingly concerned with the local *subadar* or Nawab of Bengal rather than with the emperor. Fort William was completed in 1716, but its walls were soon encumbered with warehouses; the Maratha ditch (now the Circular road) was begun in 1742 on an alarm of a Maratha incursion, but it was perhaps fortunate that its strength was never tested. The Company's servants were peppery and prosperous but very unwarlike.

At the time of Aurangzeb's death Murshid Quli Khan (Jafar Khan) was deputy governor for the Prince Azim-ush-Shan. On the accession of that prince's son as Farrukhsiyar in 1713, Murshid Quli Khan was confirmed in office. He added Bihar in 1719 and died in 1727. His son Shuja-ud-daula held office until his death in 1738 and added Orissa to his other two provinces. The governorship of the three provinces now practically became a local dynasty; the only remaining ties with Delhi

were imperial investiture and the remission of 52 *lakhs* a year as the annual tribute or *peshkash*. From 1719 at least Bengal may be said to have enjoyed substantial local autonomy. Shuja-ud-daula's son Sarfaraz proved incapable and was overthrown by Alivardi Khan, his deputy in Bihar, in 1740. Though Alivardi obtained confirmation from Delhi he had struck a severe blow at local stability by raising the hopes of adventurers within and without. Most of his fifteen years of rule was occupied in putting down rebellions or repelling Maratha incursions. The Marathas left an indelible impression on the popular mind. The Bengali poet Gangaram thus described them:

> The *bargis*[1] came up and encircled them (the fleeing villagers) in the plain. They snatched away gold and silver, rejecting all else. Of some people they cut off the hand, of some the nose and ears; some they killed outright. They dragged away the beautiful women, tying their fingers to their necks with ropes. . . . After looting in the open, the *bargis* entered the villages. They set fire to the houses, large and small, temples and dwelling places. After burning the villages they roamed on all sides plundering. Some victims they tied with their arms twisted behind them. Some they flung down and kicked with their shoes. They constantly shouted 'Give us rupees, give us rupees, give us rupees'. When they got no rupee, they filled their victims nostrils with water and drowned them in tanks. Some were put to death by suffocation. Those who had money gave it to the *bargis*; those who had none gave up their lives.

Alivardi died on 21 April 1756, after a long illness. He had no sons and his chosen successor was his grandson Siraj-ud-daula, the son of his youngest daughter who had married a nephew. Siraj, a youth of barely twenty, found himself in no easy position. All the three nephews of Alivardi (his brother's sons) had predeceased him. But Siraj had to reckon with the jealousy of his cousin Shaukat Jang, governor of Purnea, and his aunt Ghasiti Begam, supported by her *diwan* Rajballabh. To these internal complications were added the state of the foreign settlements in Bengal. Europe was then on the eve of the Seven Years War, and French and British were visibly preparing for the contest. French, Dutch, and British were all objects of suspicion, but the British were clearly the strongest of the three. They enjoyed free trade under the Mughul *farman* of 1717 and they had given some ground for complaint by overstepping their extensive privileges. Both they and the French had begun to fortify their settlements in anticipation of war with each other. The French desisted before Alivardi's actual death, but the British prevaricated and increased growing suspicion by giving asylum to a political fugitive. Siraj had also to fear rising Hindu restlessness with minority Muslim rule in what was now practically an independent state.

Siraj-ud-daula was an impulsive but vacillating youth, with many of the vices commonly attributed to princes and little of the judgement or resolution which can redeem them. Denied by his youth the

[1] *bargi*: a corruption of *bargir* a horseman supplied with mount and arms by government.

experience to cure his faults and by circumstances the security which would in time have provided it, he acted on a series of contradictory impulses which combined to compass his ruin. He first secured the person of Ghasiti Begam and then marched against his cousin at Purnea. But on the receipt of a letter from Drake, the Governor of Fort William, he turned about, caused the English factory at Kasimbazar to be seized, and then marched on Calcutta. It then became clear that reports of new fortifications were ludicrously optimistic and the spirit of the factors was the reverse of aggressive. Calcutta was invested on 16 June. Three days later the governor, the commandant, and most of the council joined the women and children on board ship on the river, and dropping downstream left the distracted garrison to its fate. Under Holwell, the junior member of council, resistance was prolonged for a day and then Calcutta surrendered. There followed a search for treasure and the incident of the Black Hole.[1] With characteristic imprudence Siraj did nothing to follow up his victory, leaving Drake and the fugitives to languish at Fulta, succoured only by a reinforcement of 230 men in July. Instead he confined himself to eliminating his only dynastic rival, Shaukat Jang.

The news of this disaster reached Madras at the moment when an expedition against the French in Hyderabad was under active preparation. The happy obduracy of the senior royal officer resulted in the command being given to Robert Clive, then the deputy Governor of Fort St. David. Clive turned with delight from the bickerings of the Madras Council to the hazards of war. He had no doubts and no fears. He set out on 16 October with 900 European and 1,500 Indian troops, conveyed by Admiral Watson with five men-at-war and five transports. Fulta was relieved in December and Calcutta recovered on 2 January 1757. This roused the nawab to measures he should have taken long before, but an indecisive engagement again disheartened him; by another volte-face he concluded peace and an alliance on 9 February. Calcutta was restored and the Company's privileges renewed with the addition of permission to fortify the town and coin money.

Siraj's incompetence has already been sufficiently indicated, and his fall was now only a matter of time. He was surrounded by disaffected Hindu officers, supported by the banking house of the Seths, and was faced with resolute and skilful men. Clive's first care was to deal with the French. Their post at Chandernagar, unlike Calcutta in the previous year, was well fortified, and Bussy was in the Northern Sarkars within 200 miles of Calcutta. He was helped by the news of Ahmad Shah Durrānī's capture of Delhi (January 1757) which once more caused Siraj to hesitate in supporting the French lest he should need British aid in resisting the Afghans. By the end of March and with the aid of Watson's ships Chandernagar was in British hands. Siraj was now isolated. Unlike his grandfather, Siraj was unfriendly to his officers; with the death of Shaukat Jang he had thrown off all

[1] See note at end of chapter, p. 35.

restraint while his opponents had lost hope of peaceful redress. It was not therefore necessary for the English leaders to concoct a conspiracy; they had only to decide as to which conspiracy to support. Clive's position was still precarious. The French were still in strength in Hyderabad and his forces and the ships of Watson might at any time be recalled to meet pressing dangers in the south. The nawab could not but be hostile, and the great disparity between the numbers and strength of his forces could not be fully known. These were the reasons which caused Clive to welcome a possible change of government and to resort to deceit rather than to open warfare.

The first overtures to the British had been made in the previous autumn while they were still at Fulta. It was not until Mir Jafar, an elderly brother-in-law of Alivardi Khan, and the recently dismissed *bakshi* of the nawab, became willing to join the Seths and Hindu officers that Clive took action. There followed the treaty by which Mir Jafar promised to confirm the Company's privileges, to pay a million pounds as compensation for the loss of Calcutta and half a million more to its European inhabitants. By private agreement, in addition, there were to be large consolations for the chief Company officers.

It was thought that the nawab's treasury contained forty millions of which the go-between, the Sikh financier Amin Chand (Omichand), thought himself entitled to 5 per cent. This proportion was thought to be unreasonable and Amin Chand's threat of exposure of the plot was countered by devising a second copy of the treaty doctored for his benefit. The secret was out by the beginning of June in any case, but the nawab, irresolute to the last, not only failed to seize Mir Jafar but asked for his help instead.

Clive left Calcutta on 22 June: his army of 800 Europeans and 2,200 Indians faced the nawab's motley and disaffected 50,000. In spite of previous south Indian experience Clive was doubtful of the issue, and showed on the eve of the battle almost the only sign of irresolution in his life. The battle was little more than a cannonade, and was settled first by Kilpatrick's unauthorized advance and then by Siraj's headlong flight. Mir Jafar, like Stanley at Bosworth, looked on from a distance, appearing cautiously next day to reap the expensive fruits of his circumspect treachery. On the 28th Clive installed him on the *masnad* at Murshidabad and four days later Siraj, captured by the new nawab's son Miran, was executed. A new era had begun.

It should not be thought that the full import of the revolution then begun was yet realized. Legally and to most outward appearances the old order continued. There had been revolutions before and the assistance of foreigners was well understood. The English were not even the first Europeans to interfere in Bengali politics, for the Portuguese had done it long before them. The nawab continued to administer Bengal and Bihar as the emperor's deputy, and the Company continued to trade by imperial permission. Its privileges were enhanced and its

prestige increased. But few on either side accepted the momentary power of the Company as permanent, and in fact it was seven years before this fact was generally recognized. In the eyes of contemporaries Clive was an English Bussy controlling an Indian state by force of character and dint of superior military genius and technique;[1] he was more fortunate than Bussy in that his stage was the richest region of India and that he was relatively untroubled with formidable enemies. It was the events of the next ten years which turned a paramount influence into a new régime. Bengali dissensions had avoided the necessity of proving European military superiority by hard fighting as in the south; the demonstration was therefore yet to come.

Clive's immediate task was to establish Mir Jafar in power, and to secure the resumption of normal trade. The whole position was prejudiced at the outset, however, by the financial provisions of the treaty. The fabled treasures of Murshidabad turned out to be no more than a million and a half pounds. Clive was forced to agree to the settlement of Mir Jafar's debts by instalments and Mir Jafar found his resources strained to accomplish even this. The result was to undermine the far from firm union of the Muslim nawab with local Hindu officers. Mir Jafar looked longingly to the provincial treasuries to fill the financial void in the capital. Clive, therefore, was faced with the triple task of protecting the Hindu officers from their Muslim superior, of defending Mir Jafar from external attack, and of protecting himself from European intervention. With immense energy he accomplished all three. He put down revolts against Mir Jafar's authority, sustained Ramnarayan in his charge of Patna, and gave sanctuary to the diwan Rai Durlabh when he could no longer maintain himself in Murshidabad. With equal incisiveness he dealt with the other danger. In 1759 Ali Gauhar, the heir to the Mughul throne (later Shah Alam II), laid siege to Patna hoping to strengthen his claims at Delhi by acquiring control of Bihar and Bengal. Ramnarayan proved loyal and defended himself until Clive could send help when Ali Gauhar retired to Oudh. The third danger came from the Dutch in Chinsura. Alarmed by and jealous of the English successes the Dutch hoped to play on the nawab's restiveness at his dependence upon the Company by sending an armament from Batavia. Although England was at peace with Holland, Clive, by a series of adroit and bold moves, placed them in the position of aggressors, destroyed their expedition, and exacted compensation. Henceforth the Dutch confined themselves to commercial activity and disappeared as a factor in Indian power politics.

Clive left Calcutta in January 1760 in a blaze of personal glory. He had excelled Bussy in his own field; in three years he had made a position unassailable which Bussy had precariously maintained for nine. But it was clearly a highly unstable one, depending on the genius of a single forceful personality. Clive had become the indispensable

[1] His Persian title, by which he was popularly known, was Sabat Jang, 'the tried in battle'. It was procured by Mir Jafar from the emperor.

power behind and on occasion against the throne, and on his withdrawal there must either be an Indian reaction or the conversion of a dominating influence into explicit authority. In fact both occurred during the most confused and most sordid five years of the British period of Indian history. It will be convenient to trace the thread of power politics before examining the web of corruption with which it was entangled.

The first step was the replacement of Mir Jafar by his son-in-law Mir Kasim. Mir Jafar had always hoped to free himself from the Company's meshes, but he lacked the resolution to oppose Clive or the skill to build up his strength. All he succeeded in achieving was an impression of unreliability, of being a nuisance without being a danger. On the Company's side there was no one with the address to maintain the tension between nawab and Company but many to see in an unstable situation the chance of financial gain. The Company found itself in financial straits and pressed by puzzled directors who thought that the most industrious province in India ought not to be a tax on their resources. The nawab offered an easy target by falling into arrears with his subsidies. To Clive succeeded the plausible and shallow Holwell and to Holwell the honest and capable but rather ineffective Henry Vansittart from Madras. Local greed pushed him along the path of aggression and local jealousies neutralized his instincts of integrity. The death of Mir Jafar's son Miran in July opened the question of the succession. Mir Kasim was proposed as *diwan* or deputy nawab; Mir Jafar after his usual vacillation refused to trust himself to the power of his kinsman and retired to Calcutta with an English guard.

The new nawab was a very different man from his father-in-law. Able and ambitious, though suspicious and unwarlike, he was an adept in the cynical and pitiless politics of the time, and determined to assert his independence at the earliest opportunity. In him the Indian reaction was ably embodied. But he had mortgaged his fortunes as the price of office. The three districts of Burdwan, Midnapur, and Chittagong were assigned to the Company for the maintenance of their troops, the outstanding debts of Mir Jafar were to be repaid, and £200,000 paid in cash to the Calcutta Council. There were now two powers in Bengal, each determined to assert themselves, and each urgently requiring funds which they could only obtain at the other's expense. A clash was inevitable, and that it was postponed for three years is evidence both of the ability of the new nawab and the divided counsels of Calcutta.

The nawab first dealt with the emperor, who had again been repulsed in Bihar, and whose restoration to Delhi the Calcutta authorities proposed to assist. Mir Kasim suspected that this might end in the transfer of Bengal to the Company (as happened five years later) and by adroit diplomacy he both obtained his own investiture from Shah Alam and induced him to leave Bihar. He then, with Vansittart's support, procured the removal of Clive's protégé at Patna, Ramnarayan,

and so possessed himself of the resources and treasure of Bihar. He next began to raise a force of disciplined troops, the most effective of all bargaining counters, and, to secure himself from undue interference from Calcutta, transferred his capital from Murshidabad to Monghyr. All these measures required money and it was on this rock that the first attempt of an Indian state to get on equal terms with the West foundered. To pay his way the nawab must make full use of the commercial tolls on the Bengal trade. To keep up their remittances to England, the Calcutta merchants must increase their receipts, and to amass the private fortunes which the successes of Clive seemed suddenly to have placed within their grasp, the same merchants must not allow their new-found economic freedom to be abridged. The imperial *farman* of 1717 had exempted the Company from all export and import duties on their foreign trade, but the private trade of the Company's servants was subject to the ordinary internal tolls. In 1757 Clive obtained from Mir Jafar the practical exemption of this private internal trade from duty without an express provision in the treaty. Naturally the private trade of the Company's servants grew apace while that of the Indian merchants dwindled. Thus Mir Kasim found his revenue declining at the moment he wished to increase it. Early in 1762 Vansittart agreed to an *ad valorem* duty at 9 per cent. on European traders' private goods as against a duty of 40 per cent. for others, and admitted the right of the local *faujdars* or police officers to adjudge disputes. At this the Calcutta Council revolted; the duty was reduced from 9 to 2½ per cent. on salt only and the right of the nawab's officers to interfere was rejected. The nawab retaliated by abolishing the duties altogether. Between the Company's servants' determination 'to do themselves justice' and the nawab's resolve to be master in his own house there could be no compromise, and war was now inevitable. The conflict was precipitated at Patna where an irascible English chief and an embittered nawab provoked each other beyond endurance. A regular campaign ensued during the summer of 1763, during which the nawab's new army was defeated in four pitched battles. Losing all control Mir Kasim executed his commander-in-chief, murdered Ramnarayan, the Seths, and his British prisoners in Patna, and then fled to Oudh. Mir Jafar was now restored but the war was not yet over. Mir Kasim enlisted the support of Shuja-ud-daula, the Nawab Wazir of Oudh, who was joined by the wandering emperor. An interval ensued during which both sides recruited their strength, the English commander Adam died in Calcutta, and his successor Hector Munro severely repressed the first Indian military mutiny. Fighting was resumed in the autumn of 1764 and the campaign concluded by the resounding victory of Baksar on 22 October. Shah Alam once more joined the British camp, Shuja-ud-daula fled to Rohilkund while Oudh was overrun, and Mir Kasim disappeared into obscurity. Plassey was a cannonade but Baksar a decisive battle. It was this battle, the culmination of an obstinate campaign, which determined the British

mastery of Bengal. Hitherto they had been rivals and manipulators of existing authority; their power was fortuitous and hedged with doubt; the issue was still open. It was now unchallenged and about to receive imperial recognition; henceforth its full extent was only partly concealed for a time by surviving legal fictions. Plassey marked the beginning of the British expansion in Bengal; Baksar determined the success of the enterprise. The period was rounded off by the death of Mir Jafar in 1765. He had been restored on condition of reimposing the old duties on Indian merchants, with 2½ per cent. on salt for the British, along with further presents to the governor and council. The council (disregarding Muslim law) raised his second son Najm-ud-daula to the *masnad* in preference to his grandson, and strengthened their hold by stipulating that the government should be carried on by a deputy of their own choosing. His name was Muhammad Reza Khan; his appointment marked the virtual end of independent Indian rule in Bengal.

We may now turn to the nature of the régime which had achieved so marked a success in so short a time. Sir Alfred Lyall described these years as 'the only period which throws grave and unpardonable discredit on the English government'. Clive was still more forthright. 'I will only say that such a scene of anarchy, confusion, bribery, corruption and extortion was never seen or heard of in any country but Bengal, nor such and so many fortunes acquired in so unjust and rapacious a manner.' It was, however, Clive himself who had started the moral collapse of the Bengal civilians. Before 1756 the Calcutta civilians had been neither better nor worse than their kind elsewhere. They carried on the Company's business with efficiency and enterprise; they used the energy remaining from their not overweighty public duties to prosecute private trade on their own account. They were expected to do this, and indeed could not have lived on the meagre salaries allotted by the Company. But they were restrained from excesses both by the power of the local government, vigilant to safeguard the interests of the merchants and peasants, upon whom its own revenue depended, and by an ingrained respect for constituted authority, even when shaken by the blows inflicted on the Mughul government by Persian, Maratha, and Afghan. The unknown power of the nawab and the provisions of the *farman* of 1717 together kept their private commercial activities within reasonable bounds. The events of 1757 transformed the situation. The sudden transformation of plodding merchants into the arbiters of Bengal polities dazzled and unbalanced men already smarting from loss and indignity. The two restraints were removed almost simultaneously; the nawab became a suitor for British favour instead of the regulator of British activity, and the imperial government dissolved in the clash of Maratha and Afghan, only to be revived in the person of a wandering fugitive. The merchants were merchants still; they suddenly found avenues to undreamed of wealth open before them, and they lacked the inner restraint

which alone could promote moderation or justice. They were neither exceptionally evil nor unusually weak, but they were overwhelmed with the unfamiliar temptations which now crowded upon them.

The first step was taken by Clive himself in negotiating the treaty of 1757 with Mir Jafar. Before Plassey, it was privately agreed that in addition to the official compensation, £400,000 should be given to the army and navy and £150,000 to the select committee of six. The members of council received £50,000 to £80,000 each. Clive received in all £234,000. In addition he received a *jagir* worth about £30,000 a year on his own plea that the dignity of an imperial noble (a status procured for him by Mir Jafar from the emperor) required a revenue grant to maintain it. These were the grants which caused Clive 'to be astonished at his own moderation'. The discovery that the nawab's treasury contained only 1½ millions sterling instead of the 40 millions which were rumoured led to no abatement in the demands. Mir Kasim won the support of Calcutta by promising to pay Mir Jafar's arrears, and paid a further £200,000 to the council. Najm-ud-daula was forced to pay another £139,000 odd to the same council. With such examples at the top it is not surprising that the lesser men scrambled to make quick fortunes. Their first means was the reception of more modest presents from humbler men. The most prized posts were up-country agencies such as the residency of Murshidabad or the headship of factories like that of Patna. Here there were the greatest number of moneyed men with the strongest motives for the corrupt use of their wealth. But the new power of the Company put every young factor in the way of receiving presents, if not for benefits received, then in the hope of favours to come. The second method was private participation in the internal trade of the country. The Company's servants enjoyed unlimited credit. They could both command whatever capital was needed and live, even at Madras, at the rate of £5,000–6,000 a year. This proved so profitable that once experienced, as a result of Clive's arrangements with Mir Jafar, the servants were willing to risk war and the possible resultant bankruptcy of the Company itself rather than give it up. This open private trading duty free in competition with Indian merchants paying 40 per cent. *ad valorem* was made more extensive and profitable by intimidation exercised through agents or *gomastahs*. The British held that the right to private internal trade carried with it the right 'to do themselves justice'. Mir Kasim's attempt to enforce discipline through his *faujdars* was one of the immediate causes of the Company's breach with him. Ellis of Patna employed bodies of up to 500 sepoys in order to deal with the nawab's agents. In addition to all this there were lucrative contracts to be worked. Thus the light of commercial greed, ignited by sudden and unexpected opportunity and fanned by unbridled power divorced from responsibility, became a devouring flame which could only be checked by drastic intervention from England. It was not effectively quenched until the time of Cornwallis and continued to smoulder until the time of

Bentinck seventy years later. Men made fortunes, returned to England, lost them, and returned to India for more. Some idea of the fevered atmosphere of these years can be obtained from the unpublished journal of James Rennell. Appointed Surveyor-General of Bengal in 1764 at the age of twenty-two, he reported an allowance of £900 and perquisites of £1,000 a year; 'I can enjoy my friends, my bottle and all the necessaries of life for £400. Besides, when I get acquainted with the trade of this part of India, I shall make much greater advantages as I shall always be able to command a capital.' He hoped to return in a few years with £5,000 or £6,000. With favourable conditions £30,000 to £40,000 was possible. This was on the eve of Clive's return. By 1769 he only hoped to retire on £120 a year. By 1771 he thought it would soon 'be high time to decamp'. He actually retired in 1777 at the age of thirty-five. Lives of fevered activity and dissipated gaiety were only too often, as the Calcutta cemeteries bear eloquent witness, cut short by death. But the personal tragedies which formed the background of fortune-making must not obscure the greater tragedy of the demoralization of the Company's service and the misery of all Bengal.

The directors had taken alarm at the decline of the Bengal remittances as early as 1758. There was more criticism of the revolution of 1760. But the hands of the directors were largely tied by dissensions in the newly important Court of Proprietors. A staid Company meeting had now become the final arbiter of a supposedly wealthy Indian province; a scramble for office ensued leading to uncertainty of tenure and divided counsels. The very class of men whom it was vital for the Company to control could make their influence felt in this direction by using their new wealth to buy Company stock with its accompanying votes. This development resolved itself into a duel between Clive who sought to use his new wealth to secure control and then reform the Indian administration and Sulivan, once his friend, a clear-headed man of business immersed in the intrigue and jobbery of the time. On the news of Mir Kasim's overthrow alarm deepened to consternation; it was not profits only, but the Company's existence which now seemed to be in question. The news coincided with Clive's triumph over his opponents in the Court of Proprietors, and the result was vigorous action. Clive (now an Irish peer) was appointed Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Bengal, and was empowered to act, if necessary, over the head of council, with a select committee of four.[1] At the same time the practice of receiving presents was drastically curtailed and Clive was given authority to regulate the trade in salt, betel-nut, and tobacco, lately seized from the nawab, in the general interest.

Clive set sail in June 1764 and arrived in Calcutta on 3 May 1765. Within two days he had appointed his select committee and with an act of characteristic vigour had begun his second administration which constitutes his chief claim to fame as a statesman. The poacher had

[1] Colonel Carnac and Henry Verelst, already in Bengal, Sumner and Sykes, who sailed with Clive.

turned gamekeeper without loss of vigour or finesse. For the moment he wielded unquestioned authority. His second governorship showed what could be accomplished by public spirit and vigour when home and local authorities were in concert, as his first showed what vigour and ambition alone could achieve in the absence of all restraint.

On arrival Clive found that the immediate crisis which had led to his appointment had passed. Baksar had removed the imperial danger but not settled the imperial question. Vansittart had promised Oudh to the emperor, but Shuja-ud-daula was at large up-country and the fate of Allahabad had still to be settled. Najm-ud-daula had succeeded his father Jafar, but the Company had virtually taken over the revenue administration by the appointment of Muhammad Reza Khan as *naib* or deputy nawab. From Calcutta to the Delhi doab there was no one who could withstand the Company's arms, and no one but the Company who could resist an invader. Yet the wielder of all this power was still only a commercial corporation controlling directly only Calcutta and three districts close by. It will be convenient to deal with Clive's external policy first; then with the settlement of Bengal; and finally with his reform of the Company's services.

Clive's first decision was perhaps the most difficult of all to take. He had to decide where to stop. At the moment there was no visible limit to the British power, and if he had marched to Delhi, replaced Shah Alam on his throne, and taken for the Company the power of regent (*vakil-i-matlaq*, the title later assumed by Sindia), or *wazir*, no one could have stopped him. There were not wanting those who advocated this course. But Clive realized that this short cut to empire might easily have proved a blind alley. He could certainly have marched to Delhi, but Najib-ud-daula with his Rohillas and the Sikhs of the Panjab, not to mention the Jats of Bharatpur and the enigmatic Marathas of the Deccan, were made of sterner stuff than the peoples of the Gangetic plain. Difficulties would have multiplied and the enterprise must soon have ended in frustration or disaster. Only a lifetime of vigorous action and the expenditure of treasure which the Company could not possibly sustain could have brought success, and then the result would not have been a commercial empire based on Calcutta, but a northern realm engrossed in Deccan and north-western politics. Clive wisely decided to limit the Company's influence to the old double *sūba* of Bengal and Bihar, leaving Oudh as a buffer between the Company, the Marathas, and possible northern invaders. This involved the difficult question of the emperor, whose return to Delhi Clive was unable to sponsor but whose complete abandonment would have cut off the authority on whom the Company depended for a legitimate title. 'I take the Shah's authority', wrote an English agent seventeen years later, 'to be of as much importance as an Act of Parliament in England if supported by as strong a force.'[1] If Clive could not implement that

[1] Major Browne, Memorandum on the Affairs of Delhi. India Office. Home Miscellaneous Series, vol. 336.

authority throughout the empire, he also could not afford to dispense with it in Bengal. Accordingly, the emperor's claim to the direct control of Oudh was discountenanced, but he was given the districts of Kora and Allahabad with a subsidy or tribute of 26 *lakhs*.[1] In return Shah Alam conferred upon the Company the *diwani* of Bengal. Oudh was restored to Shuja-ud-daula on payment of an indemnity of 50 *lakhs* and a defensive alliance concluded by which his defence was guaranteed provided he bore the expense of the necessary troops. This suited Shuja well, with the Marathas in mind; he did not realize that his new friends would eventually prove more deadly than his supposed enemies. This treaty provided a model for the system which Wellesley later developed by which Indian princes saved themselves from their enemies at the price of enmeshing themselves in the threads of the Company's spider's web.

We may now turn to the settlement of Bengal. The grant of the *diwani* regularized the revenue settlement with Najm-ud-daula, and marked the first great step towards the direct administration of Bengal by the Company. In order to understand the import of this and later developments, it is necessary to explain certain principles of Mughul administration. The powers of government were theoretically divided into the *diwani*, or power of collecting revenue and administering civil justice, and the *nizamat*, or power of commanding troops and dispensing criminal justice. From the time of Akbar it was the Mughul custom to place these powers in different hands as well as to rotate the officials from province to province. From the later years of Aurangzeb's reign governors began to be allowed to remain at their posts and to be succeeded by their sons; this development soon brought with it the combination of the two powers in the same hands. Alivardi enjoyed this double privilege and had been followed by his successors, who thus, to the Company, appeared as the sole rulers of the three provinces. The new grant meant that the Company became the *diwan* of the emperor empowered to collect revenue and administer civil justice. The *nizamat* power remained nominally with the nawab, but he had by treaty handed over its exercise to the Company's nominee, Reza Khan. The Company appointed as its deputy *diwan* the same Muhammad Reza Khan. He was thus the Company's deputy for revenue collection and the nawab's deputy for criminal justice and the control of troops. But since the Company in fact possessed the sole military power in the region and nominated the nawab's deputy, Reza Khan was in effect the deputy of the Company for the whole administration. This was a dual system in a double sense. In theory the authority (under the emperor) was divided between Company and nawab; while in practice the administration was divided between English controllers and Indian agency. It is this latter feature which was the essence of the Dual System which Hastings ended seven years later. It was an improve-

[1] Shuja had little to complain of, because he had himself only recently seized Allahabad from the legitimate governor, Muhammad Quli Khan.

ment in that the Indian deputy was now directly responsible to the Company and the Company for the deputy; it left the door wide open to abuses because all depended upon the integrity and vigilance of the Calcutta Council. Later developments consisted in the gradual taking over by the Company of revenue collection and justice by its own British agents. The Dual System is more correctly named the Indirect System, which was gradually transmuted into the Direct System.

In dealing with the Company's own administration Clive showed a vigour so great that those who remembered his previous record thought at first that it could not last and that he was malignantly determined to prevent others from amassing the fortune that he had already achieved. On the matter of presents he was fortified by explicit instructions; on that of the internal trade the Company had whittled down its original prohibition to an authority to regulate in the general interest. Clive first asserted his authority. The select committee assumed full powers. All resignations were accepted and some enforced, and the vacant places filled from Madras. Recalcitrant officials soon found that the only practicable courses were submission or return to England. Next, the orders on presents were enforced. Every servant was required to sign a covenant binding them to hand over to the Company all presents in excess of Rs. 4,000, and only to accept presents of Rs. 1,000 and upwards with the president and council's consent. The question of the internal trade was more difficult. The salaries of the Company's servants were well known to be inadequate in themselves; if the liberty of private trade as well as of receiving presents was withdrawn, they would not be left with reasonable means of subsistence. There would be wholesale evasion and the last state of things would be worse than the first. The obvious course would have been to couple the prohibition of private trade with a large increase of official salaries. But to this he could not induce the directors to agree. Clive attempted to meet this situation by regulating the private trade so as to provide the effect of regular salaries. He formed a Society of Trade to administer the salt monopoly in which the Company's servants received shares according to their rank. Under this arrangement the governor received £17,500, a colonel and a member of council £7,000 a year, and others in proportion. But the directors regarded this as disobedience to their orders and another form of corruption. Two years later the system was abolished and replaced by a system of commissions on the revenues of the province under which most of the officials received even more.[1] This system had the further disadvantage that the amounts fluctuated with the revenue figures so affording an inducement for the extortion of revenue. When to this system is added the fact that clandestine private trade continued (at least after Clive's departure) by a sort of general tacit consent, and that the secret reception of presents continued as well, it will be seen that the financial reform of the services was far from complete. Irregularities were reduced but still rampant,

[1] *Reports of the House of Commons*, vol. iv, p. 460.

and that is why Cornwallis found so much to do twenty years later. For this comparative failure the directors were partly responsible, since they vetoed the solution of adequate salaries and adopted the less satisfactory of the two alternative systems.

With equal vigour Clive dealt with military allowances or *batta*. Here the position was more difficult, for it was not a question of dealing with illicit gains but of reducing legitimate allowances improperly prolonged. *Batta* signifies an allowance for special service and was originally designed to cover the extra cost of field service as distinct from garrison duty. The practice began at Madras during the French wars, when the nawab subsidized British troops in his service in this way. It naturally spread to Bengal, but when hostile territories came within the Company's control double *batta* for field service continued to be drawn for what had now become garrison duty. Clive allowed officers in cantonments to draw half *batta*, those on field service within Bengal full *batta*, and those outside its borders double *batta*.[1] The officers felt the greatest indignation, and they could plead that their pay was more rigidly determined than that of the civilians, making little allowance for the upward trend of prices, and that they were denied in large measure the opportunities open to civilians for unofficial additions. Encouraged by one of the brigade-commanders, Sir Robert Fletcher, a mutinous movement was set on foot. This 'White Mutiny' was more dangerous than the civilian opposition, but Clive met it with equal vigour. At the same time he used a legacy of 5 *lakhs* from Mir Jafar to form a fund to make provision for officers in need when compelled to retire early. This was the forerunner of later pension schemes.

Clive retired from his second governorship in February 1767. He left the Company with defined territories recognized in law and secure for the present from attack, controlled by a docile army and chastened civilians. He had scotched rather than killed the snake of corruption, but he had taken the first long step towards an ordered and honest administration in Bengal. There was much still to be done, but there was never a return to the anarchy of the early sixties. How much of this was due to Clive himself was shown by what happened after his departure.

By the irony which commonly pursues the great, his greatest achievement was the prelude to his eclipse. The gathering criticism of the Company broke in a storm of reproach when it became clear in 1772 that the Company was threatened with bankruptcy. Parliamentary inquiry threw the glare of publicity on the actions of his first governorship and this led to Burgoyne's parliamentary attack in 1773. The attempt collapsed, ending with the unanimous resolution 'That Robert, Lord Clive, at the same time rendered great and meritorious service to his country.' But the strain proved too great for a mind prone to depression; Clive took his own life on 2 November 1774.

Clive had been praised as a soldier turned statesman. His real claim

[1] For a captain the respective rates were Rs. 3, 6, and 12 a day.

to fame is neither as statesman nor soldier but as a dynamic leader of men. He had, says Roberts, 'a certain rough-hewn, almost elemental force and a tireless energy which made him a true pioneer of empire'. He had the gift of inspiring others, the ability to improvise and the strength to persevere in all circumstances. His piercing vision saw ends so clearly that the question of means often seemed unimportant. He was fundamentally honest, but his one-track mind could only see one issue at a time and his egotism prevented him from seeing the inconsistency of courses suggested by immediate necessities. He had a genius for emergencies and a talent for dictatorship. He lacked larger views or the art of management needed for giving to conquest a foundation of justice. He was the first and greatest of the English *conquistadores*, but for statesmanship we must look to his profounder successor.

NOTE ON THE BLACK HOLE

THE incident of the Black Hole has been given only a passing mention in the text in order to place it in proper proportion to the whole story.

We owe the traditional story of the Black Hole to the descriptive powers of V. Z. Holwell, the defender of Calcutta and a plausible and none too reliable man. For fifty years little notice was taken of the incident, but it then became convenient material for the compilers of an imperialist hagiology. The transition in progress can be seen in H. H. Wilson's note to Mill's notes on his account in pp. 117–18 of vol. iii of his *History of India* (ed. 1858). The emphasis upon the incident grew so great that the Black Hole became, along with Plassey and the Mutiny, one of the three things which 'every schoolboy knew' about India.

For many years it has now been agreed that the incident was not due to the deliberate action of Siraj-ud-daulah, and that on the part of his agents it was the result of ignorance and carelessness rather than of cruelty and vindictiveness. As such it should be regarded as a deplorable incident rather than as a deliberate atrocity. The attempt to prove that the incident never occurred has not proved convincing, though the details of Holwell's account may well owe something to his imagination. The fact remains that 123 people who defended Calcutta have to be accounted for, and that the evidence for their death in battle is more slender than for their death in the Black Hole. In my judgement something like the Black Hole incident as described by Holwell actually occurred, though the numbers involved and details are not certain, as the combined result of ignorance, apathy, and confusion on the part of the nawab's agents, in the confused circumstances of the overrunning of the fort.

The interested reader will find a good account by H. E. Busteed in his *Echoes of Old Calcutta* and a judicious summing up of the controversy over its actual occurrence by H. H. Dodwell in the *Cambridge History of India*, vol. v, p. 156. The term Black Hole was the current term for the local lock-up or temporary gaol.

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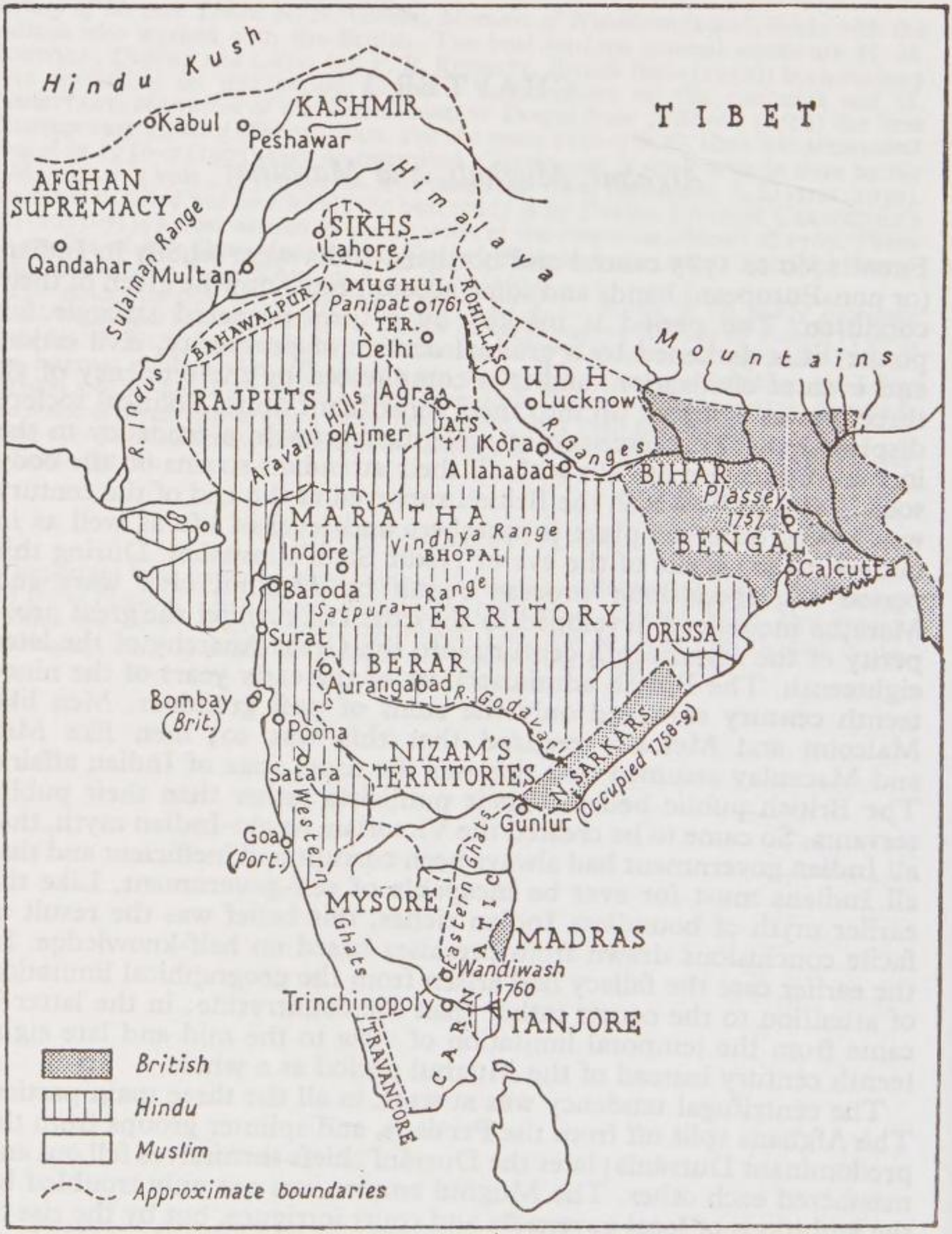
CHAPTER 3

Afghans, Mughuls, and Marathas

FROM 1760 to 1785 central and northern India were wholly in Indian (or non-European) hands and some account must now be given of their condition. The period is marked by a three-cornered struggle for power; it is darkened by a gradual decline of prosperity, civil order, and even of civilization, and it is complicated by the tendency of all three parties to break up into their constituent units. Political society displayed that characteristic of malignant growth, a tendency to the indefinite increase of cells with all their attendant strains on the body social. The India which the British surveyed at the end of the century was a very different place in numbers and level of life as well as in outlook to the India of the eve of Nādir Shah's invasion. During this period the spendthrift process begun by Mughul civil wars and Maratha incursions developed to the extent of turning the great prosperity of the seventeenth century into the Great Anarchy of the later eighteenth. The British administrators of the early years of the nineteenth century surveyed only the ruins of past grandeur. Men like Malcolm and Metcalfe realized that this was so; men like Mill and Macaulay assumed that this was the usual state of Indian affairs. The British public believed their publicists rather than their public servants. So came to be created the Victorian Anglo-Indian myth, that all Indian government had always been corrupt and inefficient and that all Indians must for ever be incapable of self-government. Like the earlier myth of boundless Indian riches, this belief was the result of facile conclusions drawn from premises based on half-knowledge. In the earlier case the fallacy had arisen from the geographical limitation of attention to the courts rather than the countryside; in the latter it came from the temporal limitation of view to the mid and late eighteenth century instead of the Mughul period as a whole.

The centrifugal tendency was at work in all the three main parties. The Afghans split off from the Persians, and splinter groups from the predominant Durrānīs; later the Durrānī chiefs themselves fell out and massacred each other. The Mughul empire was not only troubled by the ambitions of local governors and court intrigues, but by the rise of new aspirants to power in the wild Sikhs of the Panjab, the rustic Jats, and the Rohilla Afghans. The Marathas themselves, in some ways the most united of the three, had no sooner laid the apparent foundations of empire than they began to be afflicted by the ambitions of military chiefs on the frontiers and the intrigues of rival factions at Poona. In Delhi and Hyderabad resided the traditions of empire without the



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means or the spirit for maintaining them; in Afghanistan was to be found the vigour to achieve victory without the means or the knowledge to gather its fruits; amongst the Marathas existed both the means and the vigour for achieving empire along with the spirit of the guerilla and the *condottiere* which frustrated each effort when appa-

rently on the threshold of success. In all the tumultuous conflicts and twists and turns of fortune, it was not character or bravery or leadership which failed, but the feeling of unity, the ability to combine, the sense of common destiny. Great energy and skill united with untramelled individualism to replace ordered administration by the Great Anarchy.

There is no easy way through this jungle of political and military growth. The most that can be done is to trace in broad outline the fortunes of the three main parties, to note the principal occasions on which they crossed each other's paths, and how in the final result each managed to frustrate the hopes of the others. In sum the three parties did the work of the British for them. During the half-century following 1740 between them they threw away Indian independence. In these years India defeated herself.

The first of the three was the Persians and Afghans. Nādir Shah captured and sacked Delhi early in 1739 and returned to Persia laden with loot equal to three years revenue as well as the treasure of the Peacock Throne. But disappointment dogged his footsteps from this time forward; his temper soured to vindictiveness and finally crossed the verge of insanity. When he was assassinated in 1747 he was the most hated man of his age. His death was the signal for the break-up of Persia. The troubles began which ended with the emergence of the *Kajar* dynasty; the ever-turbulent Afghans broke away to form a new succession state. Henceforth the Afghan thread replaces the Persian in the woof of the Indian tapestry. The net result of Nādir Shah's incursion into India was the permanent loss of Kabul.

The Afghans found a leader of genius in Ahmad Shah Abdali. He would have remained the ruler of a vigorous people in a barren country but for one of the periodical eras of political confusion in the Indian plains. Like Babur in the last period of the kind, he had the ability to conquer, but unlike Babur he lacked the political sagacity and the skilful agents to make good his conquest. Babur had adventurers from Persia and Turkistan to draw on as well as Afghan chiefs. For the most part they were untroubled by fanaticism and used to dealing with diverse people and creeds. The Mughuls were 'kings by profession' and their officers imperialists by instinct; the Afghans were turbulent and fanatical hillmen who knew how to conquer but not how to conciliate. They could die for a cause, but not compromise for it. Ahmad Shah's first attempt on the empire failed at Sirhind in 1748. If the Mughul empire had continued to be vigorous, no more would have been heard of him east of the Indus. But the Emperor Muhammad Shah died the same year to be succeeded by his son Ahmad Shah. Under his nerveless control Delhi dissensions revived and Ahmad Shah Abdali was not slow to take advantage of them. In 1749 he again appeared, but was bought off by the governor of Lahore. In 1751–2 he appeared again and captured Lahore after a four months' siege. This time the imperial government itself bought him off by the session of

the Panjab and Multan. By 1756 the empire was further weakened by civil war and political assassinations. This time Ahmad Shah took and sacked Delhi and appointed the Rohilla chief Najib Khan (entitled Najib-ud-daula) as the guardian of the new emperor. The local forces then rallied and called in the Hindu world from the Deccan to redress the balance of the Muslim world in the north. Ahmad Shah entered India for the fifth time in 1759 and found himself confronted not so much with the Mughuls as with the resurgent power of the Hindus represented by the Marathas. The moves and counter-moves of the next eighteen months culminated in the battle of Panipat on 14 January 1761. By skilful movements Ahmad had cut off the Maratha forces from their base in the south and compelled them to fight when depressed by inaction and starved of supplies. The resounding victory which he gained appeared to lay Hindustan at his feet. The Marathas were scattered and confounded, the surviving Mughul chiefs divided and of little power, the English Company still distant in Bengal. But at this moment his troops clamoured for arrears of pay and a return to Kabul. They lacked the tenacity of Babur's Mughul *begs* and Hindustan the wealth which had existed in Babur's day. There is nothing more eloquent of the enfeebled state of the empire than that Afghans should return to their hills because Delhi could not provide them with pay. Ahmad Shah was compelled to lay aside the sceptre within his grasp, saving his face by the nomination of Shah Alam as a vassal emperor and of Najib-ud-daula as his minister. In fact he had abdicated the empire; his Indian territories were henceforth confined to the Panjab and Sind. He never returned to Delhi and his own kingdom was to break up in its turn within half a century.

In 1740 the Mughul empire had emerged from the shock of Nādir Shah's expedition apparently almost unabated in size and dignity, like a whale surfacing with undiminished bulk after some stunning blow. The Emperor Muhammad Shah still sat on his throne, the Mughul authority was accepted as legitimate throughout India except by the Marathas, and half accepted even by them. The courtiers bowed and the trumpets blew. The internal injuries sustained by recent shocks remained largely concealed, and for a few years a deceptive calm prevailed in Indian affairs. The attempt to recover Malwa failed, but the Marathas were repulsed from Bengal by Alivardi Khan. The north-west, except Kabul, remained intact, the Nizam was firmly entrenched in the Deccan. A number of provincial governors were even induced to pay visits of respect to Delhi. This calm ended with the repulse of the Afghans and Muhammad Shah's death in 1748. Though lacking in courage, energy, and decision he had a certain subtlety combined with a sense of dignity, and a certain persistence running through his vacillations which raised him above the level of a puppet. But his son Ahmad had neither dignity nor sense. The result was a series of internal commotions which ruined the empire.

The Wazir Qamr-ud-din Khan had been killed at Sirhind and the

Nizam-ul Mulk died at Burhanpur within a few months of Muhammad Shah. The stage was thus cleared for new characters. They were younger, more vigorous, and no less able, but lacking in their elders' discretion and sense of obligation to the imperial idea. The new Wazir was Safdar Jang, the governor of Oudh since his father-in-law's death in 1739. He disposed of offices without reference to the emperor, who retorted, with the encouragement of his queen, by forming a court party headed by the eunuch Javid Khan. Javid Khan was assassinated and the emperor then turned to a young grandson of the old Nizam, Ghazi-ud-din, Imad-ul-Mulk. Imad-ul-Mulk was a youth of eighteen of great bravery and remarkable talents but devoid of scruple, principle, or direction. In the hands of this desperate pilot the empire finally foundered. In 1753 Imad succeeded in ousting Safdar from Delhi after a six months' war in which old Delhi,[1] then more populous than Shahjahanabad, was ruined. Within a few months he fell out with the emperor, deposed and blinded him, and raised the elderly son of Jahandar Shah to the throne with the title of Alamgir II. The new sovereign was devout and serious minded but quite unused to public affairs, so that Imad-ul-Mulk was in complete control.

Having thus secured himself in power the minister turned his thoughts to restoring the imperial fortunes. An attempt to recover the Panjab on Ahmad Shah Abdali's fourth invasion of India culminated in the sack of Delhi in January 1757. Imad-ul-Mulk had already called in the Marathas during his struggle with Safdar Jang; he now called them in again against Ahmad Shah. From this moment they became principals in north Indian power politics. It was their forces which recovered Lahore in 1759 and their armies which faced Ahmad Shah on his fifth return to India. Imad-ul-Mulk, who had forfeited all trust by his deceit and all respect by his violence, became a puppet in his turn. His eclipse in public esteem was completed by the murder of the blameless Alamgir in 1759. His son, Ali Gauhar, had escaped a similar fate by flight from Delhi the year before. When Ahmad Shah retired from Delhi after Panipat, his supporter the Rohilla chief Najib-ud-daula secured control of Delhi and Imad-ul-Mulk disappeared into obscurity.[2]

In this welter of conflict, massacre, and bad faith the empire ended as an effective power. It continued to provide a legal framework for Indian politics and as an idea lasted on to the Mutiny. But though the Mughul *raj* was over, a Mughul state in the Delhi district persisted for another quarter of a century. It is conveniently distinguished from the old empire by the name of the kingdom of Delhi. The Delhi rulers retained the imperial forms and customs, but they were essentially local princes with limited horizons. The kingdom had its ups and downs and at times was comparatively formidable. It virtually ended as an independent power with the advent of Sindia in 1785, though its extinction is usually dated from the blinding of Shah Alam in 1788.

[1] i.e. the city stretching from the Delhi Gate to the Purana Qila.
[2] He is said to have died in 1800.

Najib-ud-daula ruled Delhi from 1761 to 1770. In theory he was the deputy of both Ahmad Shah and the new emperor Shah Alam; though he never broke with either, he was in practice an independent princeling. The disappearance of Ahmad Shah on the one hand and the exhaustion of the Marathas on the other provided him with an opportunity of which he made full use. He was harassed by Sikh forays in the north and Jat insurgence in the south; he was strong enough to defeat but not to subdue either. His death was followed by Shah Alam's return to Delhi and the rule of the Persian adventurer Mirza Najaf Khan. Shah Alam was crowned emperor in 1759 while a fugitive in Bihar. Though by no means brilliant he was the most talented and personable of the later Mughul emperors and in happier times he might have had a prosperous reign. The French adventurer Jean Law, who knew him well, thus described him.[1]

> The *Shahzada* passed for one of those who have had the best education and who have most profited by it. This education consists particularly in the knowledge of religion; of the Oriental tongues, and of history, and in the writing of one's academic exercises well. In effect, all that I could perceive decided in his favour. He is familiar with the Arabic, Persian, Turki, and Hindustani languages. He loves reading and never passes a day without employing some hours in it. . . . He is of an enquiring mind, naturally gay and free in his private society, where he frequently admits his principal military officers in whom he has confidence.

For several years Shah Alam endeavoured to make imperial bricks without the straws of money or loyalty by borrowing troops with which to assert his authority over his nominal lieutenants. His attempt to recover Bengal with the help of Shuja-ud-daula of Oudh (the successor of Safdar Jang) was finally foiled in 1764 at Baksar. There followed the settlement with Clive by which he obtained control of Kora and Allahabad and some tribute from Bengal. The death of Najib in 1770 compelled him to choose between permanent seclusion in Allahabad under British protection or a last attempt to restore the imperial fortunes with all its attendant risks. His decision to return to Delhi was inconvenient to the British but creditable to his honour and spirit. Because the Company would not assist his project he accepted Maratha aid and in consequence lost his foothold down country. But the prophesied Maratha tutelage did not occur. That was mainly due to the ability of Mirza Najaf Khan who was the effective ruler of the Delhi kingdom from Shah Alam's return in January 1772 until his own death ten years later. The Sikhs were repulsed, the Jats suppressed, Agra recovered, and the Marathas held at arm's length. At his death he controlled a broad band of territory stretching from the Sutlej to the Chambal and from Jaipur to the Ganges.

Najaf Khan's death in 1782 coincided with a famine comparable with the Bengal famine of 1770. One-third of the rural population is said to have perished and the country had not fully recovered at the

[1] J. Law, *Mémoire sur l'empire mogul*, p. 329.

time of Fortescue's revenue report on the Delhi territory in 1820. The misery and poverty thus created encouraged a renewal of dissension and there was now no capable leader left on whom the emperor could lean. In 1785 Mahadji Sindia was invited to Delhi and his position legalized with the title of deputy *Vakil-i-Mutlaq* or Regent of the Empire. In 1787 Sindia's defeat at Lalsont in Rajputana weakened his hold on the north and before he could recover the Rohilla Ghulam Qadir (grandson of Najib-ud-daula) had seized Delhi and blinded Shah Alam in a fit of frenzied frustration at his failure to find expected treasure in the palace. The deed excited general horror throughout India. Ghulam was defeated and executed by Sindia and the emperor restored. He lived to welcome the British in 1803, but henceforward he was a pensionary, pitied, respected, and disregarded. The Delhi kingdom became a Maratha province.

The only other centre of political power in the north was Oudh. Failing in his attempt to take Bengal under imperial cover, Shuja-ud-daula turned to the Company from whom he obtained Allahabad by purchase and with whose help he subdued the Rohillas. But the price of this act and of security from the Marathas was a British brigade stationed on the borders of his dominions, with the result that Oudh passed into the orbit of the new political system now developing in Bengal. In the rest of north-west India there was no defined power at all. Sind recognized the Afghan supremacy and Gujarat, like Malwa, was under Maratha control. The collection of Rajput states no longer acknowledged Mughul supremacy, but remained disunited, disorganized, and distracted by Maratha interference. The Panjab gradually slipped from the erratic Afghan grasp to become a prey to war bands led by robber chiefs. The most prominent of these were the Sikhs, now relieved from Mughul menace and Afghan threat. The Panjab anarchy paved the way for the rise of the later states and prepared the way for Ranjit Singh.

The third of the contending claimants for the *masnad* of India now demands our attention. The Marathas have usually been regarded as more vigorous, more capable, and more united than the Mughuls in the eighteenth century. It is certain that they were much more vigorous, and that they produced many leaders of the highest ability. But their fate and that of India would have been very different if they had possessed even a modicum of unity. They equalled their competitors in courage and ability, and surpassed them in the possession of something like national spirit, but in ability to work together and to subordinate ambition to the common weal they were no better than the late Mughul or adventuring Afghan. They had the great handicap of lacking imperial tradition. What little they had came from their own recent experience or was borrowed from their opponents. Sivājī gave them a pattern of military glory and fearless patriotism but no code of imperial conduct. Shāhū's long residence at Aurangzeb's court introduced some tincture of Mughul manners, but not political conceptions in the grand

manner. In the early eighteenth century the Marathas faced the opportunities of empire building with the minds of raiders; when they took to the business in earnest a generation later these efforts were stultified by the desire of each part to be greater than the whole.

Sivājī had left a compact kingdom which had won its independence and levied contributions on the surrounding districts. In the next twenty years the fight for independence was converted into a struggle for existence. This epic struggle included a feat comparable to that of the Chinese communists in the thirties, that of the traversing of hostile provinces and the founding of a fresh centre of resistance at Gingi in the Carnatic. Emphasis has usually been laid on the Maratha feat of breaking the back of Aurangzeb's empire; it should not be forgotten that Aurangzeb on his side achieved the extinction of Sivājī's compact and well-organized kingdom. The loose organization, the wide discretion of lieutenants, and the widespreading movements of the leaders which this struggle made necessary permanently changed the nature of the Maratha polity. The loose, self-destructive confederacy of later days was born of the indomitable wanderings of the Maratha chiefs in the last years of the seventeenth century. The unitary political principle was then lost; what remained was a bounding energy and enterprise and brilliant local leadership. For Sivājī guerilla warfare and *chauth* or blackmail levies was a tactic; for his successors a rule of life. The Marathas became the land Vikings of India without ever quite equalling the constructive achievement of the Norman kingdoms. Aurangzeb achieved his final triumph nearly a hundred years after his death when the Maratha confederacy collapsed through its own dissensions.

The period after 1707 which saw the revival of the Maratha kingdom also saw the rise of the Maratha prime ministers or Peshwas. Raja Shāhū reigned until 1749 and was never a cipher in the government. But he had spent his youth as a Mughul hostage, and what he had acquired in taste he had lost in energy. He was one of those rulers like Charles VII or Louis XIII of France who lack the vigour to govern themselves but possess the wisdom to choose and maintain those who can. A remarkable Chitpavan Brahman family performed the service with such success that the imperial sceptre seemed for a time to be within their grasp. Bālājī Vishvanāth, the founder of the family, rescued Shāhū from his enemies and restored order within Maharashtra itself. His son Baji Rao I turned his face northwards. The father had obtained the *chauth* of the six Deccan provinces; the son obtained the outright cession of Malwa in 1738 after a series of successful campaigns and a daring raid to the gates of Delhi. A foothold was secured in Gujarat. During this period the chiefs whose families later broke up and in some cases survived the Maratha empire first distinguished themselves. Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Sindia were prominent in Malwa, Damaji Gaekwar in Gujarat, and Raghujī Bhonsla in Berar.

Baji Rao died in 1740 at the early age of forty-two, but his son suc-

ceeded to his office and proved equally able. Under him the Maratha power reached its zenith. It became an empire *within* India and bade fair to become the empire *of* India. Yet the sprouting of the first seeds of disintegration could already be seen in the antagonism of Bālājī and Raghujī Bhonsla of Berar. Raghujī invaded Bengal and actually annexed Orissa in 1751. But the larger prize eluded him not only because of the vigorous resistance of Alivardi Khan but also because of a Maratha threat in his rear. Bālājī's plans were interrupted by the death of Raja Shāhū in 1749. He had never approved of the policy of northward expansion at the expense of the Mughuls, whose vassal he always believed himself to be. His removal was a gain to Maratha imperialism, but it also involved succession questions which delayed expansion. Bālājī turned for a time to the Deccan, now lacking the strong hand of the Nizam, and to the Carnatic where confused politics invited interference. But Bussy upheld the feeble hands of the Nizam Salabat Jang so that his efforts in that quarter were indecisive. It was in the north that a dramatic opening came. First Safdar Jang invited Maratha help against the Bangash Afghans who had invaded Oudh. The Afghans were defeated and Rohilkhund occupied. Then Imad-ul-Mulk invited their help against Safdar Jang in 1753. Their assistance was the decisive factor in the civil war of that year. When Ahmad Shah sacked Delhi early in 1757 Imad called them in again. Ragunath Rao occupied Lahore in 1758. The Poona court was intoxicated with expansionist dreams and there was talk of 'flying over the walls of Attock'. The Abdali's *riposte* came in 1759–60 when he drove the Maratha army with loss into Rajputana and once more occupied Delhi. Maratha honour as well as imperialism was now engaged and the die was cast for the Panipat campaign. The finest armament ever collected by the Marathas was dispatched under the Peshwa's uncle Sadāshiv Rao, known as the Bhao Sahib, the victor of Udgir over the Nizam.

The battle of Panipat on 14 January 1761 was not only a defeat but a catastrophe for the Maratha cause. The Peshwa's eldest son and heir, the Bhao Sahib, and all the leading chiefs were killed. The Peshwa himself died of vexation within six months. Outwardly the Marathas soon appeared to recover themselves. The young Peshwa soon asserted himself and proved that he possessed his father's ability; by 1767 Maratha troops were again across the Chambal. But the Peshwa's power had been dealt a blow from which it never recovered. From this moment the tendency of military chiefs to become territorial magnates became too strong to be resisted. Dissensions at Poona increasingly palsied the central direction, while imperial ambitions grew apace among the generals. At the moment when one of them, Mahadji Sindia, proved stronger than the rest and fit to rule, he died prematurely in 1794. It was against this background that the Marathas collided with the nascent British power in western India.

From 1761 there are two main themes in Maratha affairs. The first is the disintegration of authority at Poona. The young Madhu Rao I

proved his ability and for a time, with the help of Nana Fadnavis, succeeded in maintaining central control. His early death in 1772 reopened intrigues for the succession which brought in the Company's intervention. The two leading figures were Raghunath Rao (Raghoba) and Nana. But even after Raghunath had retired into obscurity Nana was never able to secure unquestioned power. Sindia had overcome him when he died; thereafter the new Peshwa Baji Rao II's erratic personality prevented any settled administration. There was thus never a strong government in Poona between the death of Madhu Rao Peshwa in 1772 and the treaty of Bassein thirty years later.

The second is that of the development of the Maratha succession states. The Gaekwar's family established themselves in Gujarat with their capital at Baroda. The Bhonslas similarly established themselves at Nagpur with a realm stretching to Orissa. Towards the north Holkar and Sindia at first shared and then disputed Maratha primacy. From 1761 to 1795 the Rani Ahalya Bai maintained a static and almost idyllic regime at Indore. With endless patience and infinite resource Mahadji Sindia built up a power for himself which dominated the north for a time and appeared to reanimate the Mughul skeleton by covering it with Maratha flesh. In addition to Maratha lieutenants, his instruments were mercenary troops, hired adventurers, and above all the disciplined batallions of the French officer de Boigne. In the seventies he emancipated himself from Poona. Thereafter, he used his trained troops as the decisive counters in his effort to become dominant in the Delhi kingdom and secure supremacy in Rajputana. Lalsont weakened his hold and led to Shah Alam's blinding, but he recovered and was stronger than before. His dominion stretched from the Sutlej to the Narbada: he was the recognized Mughul agent as deputy Regent of the Empire. But his ambition was still to control Poona, and in 1792 he marched thither to assert his claims against Holkar and Fadnavis in the Poona court. His death in 1794 left his dominions to the far less capable Daulat Rao, while his disciplined troops passed to the correspondingly inferior Perron. Thus by 1790 the Afghan power had withdrawn, the Mughul power had disintegrated, and the Maratha had split into fragments, the strongest and most promising of which was about to lose its leadership.

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CHAPTER 4

The Maratho Polity

We have seen that the Marathas rather than the Persians or Afghans were the successors of the Mughuls as the holders of imperial power. The Persian attempt proved to be nothing more than a high-sounding raid while the Afghans of Ahmad Shah Abdali lacked the resources to sustain and the genius to exploit their victory. The Maratha succession proved to be an abortive one, but they controlled a larger part of India for a longer period than anyone else during the Anglo-Mughul interregnum, and their contribution to the life of India should therefore be examined.

The rise of Sivājī has been dealt with in an earlier chapter;[1] here we are concerned with the Maratha administration. The whole Maratha movement is often conceived as a Hindu reaction against the encroaching Muslim power and it has therefore been assumed that the Maratha institutions also embodied this spirit. But while the Maratha spirit, fed by crusading sentiments and cemented by the *bhakti* movement with its emphasis on the unity of all men, was certainly an expression of a renascent and militant Hinduism, the institutions with which that spirit clothed itself were affected by the traditions and influences of the time and place. The student will therefore find the Maratha administrative framework by no means as wholly Hindu as the self-conscious militant Hinduism of Sivājī himself might suggest. The Marathas, ever realists, were willing to use anything which had proved itself useful and to borrow anything which appeared valuable from any quarter.

In the mid-seventeenth century there was a collapse of authority in western India from whose ruins the Maratha kingdom arose. The Nizam Shāhī realm of Ahmadnagar was absorbed into the Mughul empire in 1632, and the Bijapur kingdom showed signs of increasing weakness. The absence of central control permitted the tyranny of the petty chiefs or *watandars*; every man's hand was turned against every man. It was a period of treachery and rapine, when the blood feud flourished and chiefs were uncontrolled. Wolves prowled in Poona.

The people who lived in the Mawal valley were in many respects worse than wild beasts. The blood feud was the order of the day and rapine formed the normal state of things. Almost every *watan* had two or more claimants and they fought to the bitter end. In his blind fury the Maratha *watandar* felt no pity for his rival's widow and orphan children. But even the apparent destruction of the family would not bring the feud to an end. The loyalty of an old adherent would often save a pregnant lady or an infant heir in some village or mountain fastness far away from their native hamlet. The child

[1] *The Oxford History of India*, Book VI, Chap. 6.

would never be allowed to forget the wrongs of his family. When grown up he was sure to avenge his dead relations and plundered house. The anarchy of the time has left its mark on the family papers of the old *deshmukhs* and nowhere do we get a more terrible account of these feuds in all their horrors and bloodshed than in the papers of the Jagdales of Masur and the Jedhes of Rohidkhore. The Jagdales could not even count on the fidelity of their own servants.[1]

Internally, therefore, the rise of Shāhjī and consolidation of his realm by Sivājī may be seen as the restoration of order out of chaos. The Maratha country was first rescued from anarchy and then organized into a compact and centralized kingdom. Sivājī's first care was to curb the power of the old police and revenue officers who had become hereditary and who were known as *deshmukhs* and *deshpandes*, or collectively as *mirasdars*. They were not destroyed but their rights and dues were defined and fixed while their duties were confided to new royal officials known as *karkuns*. Some of the forts of these local chiefs were destroyed and they subsided into the position of privileged spectators of the changing scene. On this basis Sivājī organized his kingdom. At the head stood the king with the eight chief officers of state or *Ashta Pradhan*. Sivājī's innovation here was to form them into an advisory council which can be compared more closely to the Tudor Privy Council than to the Viceroy's Executive Council or a modern cabinet. The chief minister was the Peshwa or *Mukhya Pradhan* who held the seal and was responsible for general administration. The council included the commander-in-chief (*Senapati*), the *Amatya* or *Mazumdar*, a sort of finance minister, the foreign secretary (*Sumanta*), the chief justice (*Nyayadhish*), and the chief religious officer (*Pandit rao*). These officers were directly dependent on the king in Sivājī's time, having no hereditary rights and no land grants or *jagirs* for their maintenance. They were assisted by a staff of secretaries who formed the nucleus of a state bureaucracy.

The three pillars of the traditional Indian state have always been the peasants who paid the land revenue, the main source of income, the administrators of justice and order, and the army which defended society. In revenue matters the country was divided into a number of districts or *prants* which, with their subdivisions may be compared to the Mughul *parganas* and *sarkars*. The general system of assessment was based on that of Malik Amber in Ahmadnagar who recognized four kinds of soil, fixed a permanent cash payment, and abolished revenue farmers in favour of direct dealings between the district officers and the village headman or *patels*. Sivājī added an accurate survey which was carried out by Annaji in 1678, the abolition of many small local cesses or duties, and the encouragement of the settlement of waste land by various means. The peasant was cherished by the state: 'he knew what he had to pay and he seems to have been able to pay without any great oppression'.[2] Order and justice were left in the

[1] S. N. Sen. *Administrative System of the Marathas*, 2nd ed., pp. 29–30.
[2] Kennedy, *History of the Great Mughuls*, vol. ii, p. 125.

villages to the village officers and panchayats. All civil suits were decided by this means, while criminal matters were dealt with by the royal officers. In the towns justice was administered by the *Nyayadhish*, the Maratha equivalent of the Mughul *Qazi*. The army had both stationary and mobile departments. The former comprised the hill-forts, of which there were about 240, with an average garrison of 500. They could not have all been fully garrisoned at one time and many must have normally had mere token forces. But collectively they formed storehouses in time of peace, refuges in case of invasion, and an ensurance against surprise. They were the core of the Maratha defence and proved themselves against Aurangzeb. For their maintenance Sivājī devised an ingenious mixture of classes, placing a Maratha *havaldar* in charge of the gates, a Brahman *sabnis* in charge of the accounts and muster roll, and a Prabhu *karkun* in charge of the stores. The mobile army consisted first of the feudal array of the *watandars*, an undependable and motley host; the essential portion, however, was the cavalry (*bargiri*) and infantry directly maintained by the state. They were carefully graded and grouped and controlled with a strictness which was remarkable for the times. In addition there was the *silahdar* cavalry whose members provided their own horses and arms, a sort of yeoman horse, and the freebooters who were allowed to attach themselves to any expedition, whose Marathi name was *pendhara*, and who were the forerunners of the later dreaded Pindaris.

Land was classed in Maratha eyes as *swarajya*, or homeland under direct rule, which was organized into sixteen districts, and *moglai* or land under alien, generally Mughul rule. Like the early Islamic distinction between *dar-ul-Islam* and *dar-ul-harb*, this latter was legitimate prey. Here could be levied the two exactions known as *sardeshmukhi* and *chauth*. *Sardeshmukhi* was a levy of a tenth of the revenue assessment claimed on the legal fiction that Sivājī was *Sardeshmukh* or overlord. *Chauth* was a levy of one-fourth of the revenue assessment as a fee for non-molestation. It was, says Dr. Sen, 'a tribute exacted from the weak by the strong'; it resembled danegeld more nearly than anything else in English experience.[1] Such distinctions could be made out and such claims put forward only in a region where political authority was weak and boundaries confused. These reveal the secret of Sivājī's financial success, for it was by these means that war was made to pay.

From this brief description we can proceed to consider the distinctive features of the new Maratha state. Compared with the complicated structure of Shahjahan's empire it is clear that it is simple and almost rudimentary. But it possessed several interesting features which were of significance for the future. The Maratha state was conceived in anarchy, born in war, and nurtured in conflict; there was therefore no

[1] Neither Dr. Sen nor Sir J. Sarkar agrees with Justice Ranade's claim that the payment of *chauth* implied a claim to protection from others besides the Marathas. In later days it did not even ensure the payer against rival Maratha armies.

time for neat ideological constructions. It is therefore not surprising to find that for all the conscious Hindu revivalism associated with Sivājī, Maratha institutions were very mixed in origin. We have seen that while the village organization was traditional the land revenue system was largely borrowed from Malik Amber's practice in Ahmadnagar. The district officers and even the great officers of state resemble their Mughul counterparts, and the Sanskritic title of even the first minister could not prevail against the more popular designation of Peshwa. Maratha institutions were never wholly Hindu and cannot be represented as a revival of the Hindu past against an intrusive Muslim present. The mixture of ideas was illustrated in the symbolism at Sivājī's coronation in 1674.

> The coverings of the royal seat were a grotesque combination of ancient Hindu asceticism and modern Mughul luxury: tiger skin below and velvet on top. On the two sides of the throne various emblems of royalty and government were hung from gilded lanceheads. On the right stood two large fish-heads of gold with very big teeth and on the left several horses' tails (the insignia of royalty among the Turks) and a pair of gold scales, evenly balanced, (the emblem of justice) on a very costly lancehead. All these were copied from the Mughul Court. At the palace gate were placed on either hand pitchers full of water covered with bunches of leaves, and also two young elephants and two beautiful horses, with gold bridles and rich trappings. These were auspicious tokens according to Hindu ideas.[1]

It next seems clear that the administration, if authoritarian in the pattern of the times, was paternal and efficient in the *swarajya* or home territory. It did not press too hardly on the people, and with its army and hill-forts was well adapted for defence. It also seems clear that the state was more than a personal monarchy of the usual type. There was a real attempt to integrate the classes and to invest the state with an ethos beyond that of personal loyalty to the sovereign. One sign of this was Sivājī's ingenious use of the principal communities in the garrisoning of the hill-forts. Another was his patronage of the *bhakti* cult, with its emphasis on the spiritual unity of all believers. But there was a limit to this process on account of the jealousies subsisting between the intellectual and privileged Brahman, the martial Maratha, and the sturdy Prabhu. An emotional bond was found in the pose of the patriotic and religious defence of the motherland against invasion and desecration. Sivājī was the defender of *desh* and *dharma*. A further motive was found in the appeal to greed implied in the policy of plundering raids and the exaction of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*. Events showed that these centripetal measures were not in themselves sufficient to hold the Maratha people together. More and more reliance was placed on what may be called expansionism, which diverted attention from inner tensions by external conquest.

But the sympathy which the religious aspect of the Maratha state might have drawn from Hindus was dissipated by the aspect of plunder

[1] Sir J. Sarkar, *Shivaji*, 2nd ed., pp. 248–9.

which was applied as ruthlessly to Hindus as to Muslims. The peaceful Bengali and the martial Rajput were equally subjected to it and equally welcomed deliverance from Maratha hands. This defect in the ideology of the Marathas condemned them to a provincialism in outlook which prevented them from rising to the level of their later opportunities. They could think imperially in military terms but not in terms of administration. They could guide and they could conquer, but they could not conciliate. The instinct to plunder was the internal defect as the failure to combine was the later external defect of the Maratha system.

When Sivājī died in 1680, the unitary state which he had created rapidly broke up. His son and successor Sambhājī led the way by disbanding the *Ashta Pradhan* Council. His capture and execution in 1689 completed the process, and for a number of years the Maratha state was precariously directed by Raja Ram from Gingi in the far south. It was the enduring result of Aurangzeb's Deccan campaigns to have broken beyond repair Sivājī's construction. When Shāhū occupied his grandfather's throne after the settlement with the emperor Bahadur Shah, there was a change both of sentiment and circumstances. Shāhū had been brought up in the Mughul court and accepted the Mughul claim to paramountcy. He was never happy in the role of Mughul rebel, held a *mansab* of 10,000, and was glad to regularize the conquest of Malwa by an imperial grant from Delhi. He dreamt no dreams of Hindu empire. On the other hand Sivājī's centralized machine had broken down so that Shāhū found himself largely in the hands of military chiefs basing their power on grants of land or *jagirs*. The Maratha monarchy might easily have broken up had not the situation been saved by the Bhat family who became the hereditary Peshwas and heads of the new Maratha state. The first step in the transition of power was taken in 1714 when Bālājī Vishvanāth Bhat was appointed Peshwa. At that time the Peshwa was inferior in status to the *Pant Pratinidhi*, whose office had been created by Raja Ram at Gingi. The next step was Shāhū's decision to expand northward (the Peshwa's proposal) rather than southward (the Pant Pratinidhi's proposal). The success of this policy consolidated the Peshwa's position as the leading minister and enabled the Bhat family to secure the hereditary succession to the office. A further factor was the brilliance of successive Peshwas through three generations and beyond the death of Shāhū. Finally Shāhū's lack of an heir, his distrust of his great-nephew Ram Raja, and his failing energy in his later years all contributed to the passing of authority from the house of Sivājī to the Peshwas. By 1750 the kingdom of Sivājī had become a confederacy headed by the Peshwa.

The nominal head of the new confederacy continued to be the descendant of Sivājī. But he now lived in straitened and undignified seclusion in Satara. He still gave robes of honour for the Peshwaship and other important offices, and enjoyed some public esteem, but he possessed no powers and depended on the Peshwa for the necessities of

life. The real head was now the Peshwa, and in relation to him also a dualism speedily developed. He held his position in theory as deputy of the Raja of Satara, and in fact as controller of Maharashtra. To the old ministers and officers he was therefore but a *primus inter pares*, predominant by reason of superior might rather than right. This feeling lingered on until the end of Baji Rao II's reign. It provided a check on the Peshwa's power in Maharashtra, a check which left the later Peshwas almost helpless when they had lost control over their own subordinates like Sindia and Holkar. But to his own subordinates he was a superior and dictator. These subordinates were the officers who carried out the Maratha expansion northwards and eastwards under the Peshwa's direction. So long as he could retain control of them his power overshadowed that of the old title holders of the south. But they were, in fact, too successful. Long absences necessarily gave them independence of action while large acquisitions of territory gave them independent resources. Thus it was that the Sindias and Holkars, the Gaekwars and the Bhonslas gradually came to rival the Peshwa in power though they always recognized his superior status. The parting of the ways when, broadly speaking, the Peshwa may be said to have passed from the position of a director of a number of generals to that of the head of a military confederation of equal powers may be fixed at Panipat in 1761. Both the Peshwa's heir and cousin were killed and the Peshwa himself died of vexation at the news of the disaster. The revival brought about by Madho Rao I died away with the succession disputes which followed his death in 1772. Not only did the Peshwaship suffer a blow to its prestige from which it never recovered, but the Maratha armies were never the same. A hundred thousand Marathas were said to have perished in the battle. Henceforward the number of auxiliaries and mercenaries in the Maratha forces notably increased with a corresponding decline in Maratha cohesion and national spirit. Since they were paid for by local exactions of the Maratha chiefs the control of the distant Peshwa correspondingly decreased. Before 1761 we can say that in general the commanders of the Maratha armies in the north were agents of the Peshwa, though with a large degree of independence of action. After 1772 we can say that the northern generals were in fact independent chiefs, though still subjected to some interference from Poona and recognizing the Peshwa's nominal headship of the Maratha confederacy. The nature and extent of this process can be seen in the pains which Mahadji Sindia took to obtain Mughul confirmation for his territorial gains culminating in his appointment as deputy Regent of the Empire. Though he was careful to reserve the actual regency for the infant Peshwa the procedure clearly pointed to eventual freedom from Poona. If Aurangzeb shattered the hope of a centralized Maratha Hindu empire by breaking up Sivājī's kingdom, Ahmad Shah Abdali destroyed the prospect of an imperial Peshwaship. Mughul and Afghan between them turned the scale against a revived Hindu *raj*.

Another development which further undermined the already weakened Peshwaship was the organization by Sindia and Holkar of disciplined forces equipped with artillery and officered extensively by European adventurers. These forces were under no control from Poona; they gave their masters both independence of action in their chosen fields and also a decisive voice in the affairs of Poona itself. A final cause for the eclipse of the Peshwaship was a long minority which transferred power to a minister. Thus when we come to the time of Nana Fadnavis in the latter years of the eighteenth century we find that the royal deputy has himself a deputy, but that this deputy no longer owes his position so much to solid popular or military backing as to the diplomatic address with which he can play one party off against another. Instead of internal disputes being incidents in a united policy of action, common action such as that which led to the victory over the Nizam at Kharda in 1795 has become but an interlude in the internal struggle for power. Nor was it given to the Marathas to reach a decision in this last internal struggle. The most hopeful of the competitors, Mahadji Sindia, seemed about to gain control when he defeated Holkar in 1792. But his death in 1794 restored the balance. His successor was incapable and Holkar was unbalanced. Jaswant Rao Holkar's victory over the Peshwa in 1802 precipitated British intervention.

The early Peshwas were themselves aware of the danger of disintegration and endeavoured to avert it by a number of precautions. All *sanads* or grants were issued in Shāhū's name, thus emphasizing the subordination of all to the titular head of the state. A careful balance of power between the various chiefs was maintained by a judicious selection of both the amounts and locations of the various land grants. As far as possible a single chief was not given control of a solid block of territory. Control was also maintained over the distribution of *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*. It was not appropriated by the collectors themselves, but divided between the Peshwa, the *Pant Pratinidhi*, and the *Pant Sachiv*. Distant generals were given land grants in the Swarajya or homeland which would be forfeit in case of disobedience. Audit officers from the central treasury travelled with the Maratha armies and the final accounts from all provinces had to be passed at Poona. These checks remained real so long as the Peshwas retained their energy and a formidable force of their own. After Panipat the observance of these rules became more and more formal until they finally died away altogether.

When we speak of the late Maratha administration we are thus really inquiring into the nature of the late Maratha constitution. Its imprecise nature makes it easy to assume either that the Peshwa was the effective head of a far-flung empire or that he was simply the leading member of a group of five independent powers. In fact it was only for short periods that he was either. When the peculiar nature of the late Maratha polity and of the Peshwa's position within it is realized, it will be seen that the only Maratha administration which was specially

Maratha in genius was that of the *swarajya* land in Maharashtra itself. The outlying territories were either merely subject to the exaction of *chauth* or were administered along traditional lines by the local Maratha rulers. Most of the chiefs were too busy expanding their territories to have time to invent new administrative systems, and in the north the Mughul tradition was too strong to give them much desire to do so. Mughul influence can be discerned in Maratha states as much as Maratha influence in former Mughul lands.

Within Maharashtra itself matters were, of course, different. We have Elphinstone's description of the administration of the Peshwa's territories as he observed it when resident in Poona in the time of Baji Rao, and surveyed it after 1818.[1] In general, the picture is not unlike that of Sivāji's time. The village communities flourished; the hereditary officers continued to be excluded from power though they retained their dues. The district officers were now called *mamlatdars*; there was the same system of check and balance between the officers of the Peshwa who possessed executive authority, and the hereditary officers, like the *deshmukhs* and *darakhdars* who held in effect watching briefs over their doings. There was the same jealousy on the part of the southern landholders who held themselves to be the equals of the Peshwa as direct feudatories of the Raja of Satara, and on whom the last Peshwa's hand fell heavily. But there was a large increase of the *jagir* system in payment for military services which meant the transfer of local administration from the Peshwa's agents to those of the *jagirdar*. Elphinstone held that the system worked well apart from the vagaries of Baji Rao II, and retained as much as he could of it for some years.

When we look at the Maratha political and administrative system as a whole we are constrained to admit that while this system in Maharashtra was both effective and reasonably benevolent, it was neither wholly Maratha or strikingly original, nor offered any serious alternative to the Mughul system at its best. Both based themselves on the village, both insisted on careful assessment and moderate collection and both employed a system of checks and balances. It was good of its kind without being revolutionary. The Maratha political system was vitiated by the division of authority, first between Raja and Peshwa, and then between the Peshwa and his generals. The Marathas lacked an imperial spirit because they were nurtured in defiance rather than imperial ambition and rose to greatness through guerilla tactics rather than regular warfare. These tactics imply inferiority and the Marathas never quite got over the feeling that they were temporary freebooters who must take what they could while they could. So the detested *chauth*, instead of being discarded in favour of regular methods as they rose to dominion, became an essential part of their system. If would-be imperialists behave as plunderers and robbers they cannot expect their *imperium* to

[1] M. Elphinstone, *Report on the Territories lately conquered from the Peishwa*, 182.

be popular. So it was with the Marathas. Their dominion passed unregretted from every part of India save Maharashtra. They have only been popular as the defenders of religious and civil liberty against the Muslim and the foreigner. The rest of India has preferred to admire this work from a distance. In Indian history as a whole Maratha rule proved to be a provincial round peg in an imperial square hole.

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Pioneer work in the administrative field was done by Justice M. G. RANADE. His three works, *Rise of the Maratha Power*, *Miscellaneous Writings*, and *Introduction to the Peshwa's diaries* (all Poona, 1900) are still valuable. The study which at present holds the field is S. N. SEN, *Administrative System of the Marathas* (1925). N. S. TAKAKHOV and K. A. KELUSKAR have a chapter on administration in their *Shivaji Maharaj* (1921) and there is a chapter by S. M. EDWARDES in the *Cambridge History of India*, vol. v, ch. 23.

CHAPTER 5

The Age of Hastings

THE years 1767–72 in Bengal were covered by the governorships of Verelst and Cartier. Their terms were marked by no administrative change save the appointment of 'Supervisors' of the revenue in 1769; they covered instead a gradual revival in more discreet forms of the abuses which Clive had sought to repress. But in the life of the province an epoch was marked by the famine of 1769–70. One-third of the population was said to have died and one-third of the cultivated lands to have become waste.[1]

The husbandmen sold their cattle; they sold their implements of agriculture; they devoured their seed grain; they sold their sons and their daughters, till at length no buyer of children could be found; they ate the leaves of trees and the grass of the field; and in June 1770 the Resident at the Durbar affirmed that the living were feeding on the dead. Day and night a torrent of famished and disease-stricken wretches poured into the great cities. At an early period of the year pestilence had broken out. In March we find smallpox at Moorshedabad, where it glided through the Viceregal mutes and cut off the Prince Syfut in his palace. Interment could not do its work quick enough, even the dogs and jackals, the public scavengers of the East, became unable to accomplish their revolting work, and the multitude of mangled and festering corpses at length threatened the existence of the citizens.[2]

The speculative buying of rice and its retail at high prices, in which Company's servants were thought to share, did not make matters better. In spite of the distress the revenue was collected with 'cruel severity'. Five per cent. only was remitted in 1770 and 10 per cent. added in the year following. It is against this background that must be set accounts of the splendour of Calcutta life in the seventies and of the frolics of Hickey and his friends just after. Shuja was not without insight when he declined to entertain any commercial treaty with Clive, preferring to deny himself the advantages of the lucrative Bengal trade.

The famine had several important effects. It meant that Bengal and Bihar, for the first time in centuries, were seriously underpopulated for two generations. It dealt a heavy blow at the whole social system. Many of the *zamindars*, or hereditary farmers of the revenue, were ruined as the result of inability to collect the regular assessments from a reduced and enfeebled peasantry. Hunter dates the ruin of two-thirds of the old aristocracy from this time.[3] The loss both of artisans and

[1] Sir W. W. Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal*, pp. 53–54; Letter from the President and Council to the Court of Directors, 3 Nov. 1772, para. 6.

[2] Ibid., p. 26.

[3] Ibid., p. 57.

cultivators caused a steady decrease in the Company's profits and so hurried on the financial crisis of 1772 which led to state interference in the Company's affairs.

Warren Hastings became Governor of Bengal early in 1772. He was then not forty years old, and had first gone to India twenty-two years before. Unlike Clive, he had risen regularly up the rungs of the civilian ladder from the position of writer. In 1756 he became resident of Murshidabad and as a member of Vansittart's Council he had steadily opposed the policy of the majority. He was described by Lord North in 1773 as one who 'though of flesh and blood, had resisted the greatest temptations'. His hands were admitted to be clean, yet it was a striking commentary on the times that he could return to England at the age of thirty-two after fourteen years service with a fortune of £30,000. In 1769 he returned to India as second-in-council at Madras, where his good conduct earned him promotion to Bengal. He had shown skill, courage, and integrity but had as yet no sign of that enigmatic greatness which was to make him a standing puzzle and centre of controversy in Anglo-Indian history. His apparent task was the consolidation of the Company's rule in Bengal, and to this he looked forward with no sense of elation. But destiny had reserved for him a far greater one. It was the preservation of the British possessions from deadly danger without and bitter schism within. He found the Company a commercial corporation turned revenue farmer; he left it one of the great powers of the Indian sub-continent.

At first Hastings's course was clear. He found himself at the head of a council of twelve or thirteen and subject to a majority vote in all matters save foreign affairs which were controlled by himself and two others. But the mandate of the directors was definite, the mind of the new governor lucid and vigorous and his methods tactful and adroit, while the servants were now resigned to the idea of some regulation. Their tactic of opposition was circumvention rather than defiance. It thus came about that the first years of Hastings's administration ran more smoothly than any period since Plassey. The foundation was thus laid on which Hastings and British India were able to stand during the years of stress which followed.

The directorial instructions by which Hastings was guided included a large discretion of which he made full use. 'We now arm you with full powers', wrote the directors, 'to make a complete reformation.' His first care was to deal with the *diwani* or revenue administration. For seven years this had been carried on by Muhammad Reza Khan and Shitab Rai as deputies for the Company which was now the imperial diwan for Bengal and Bihar. These men were deposed and their offices abolished. The Company 'stood forth as diwan', and undertook the collection of the revenue by its own agents. In practice this meant the direct control of the whole civil administration, for civil justice went with tax collection. English collectors were appointed for each district, to be supervised by a Board of Revenue in Calcutta. A preliminary

revenue settlement was made for five years, the lands being farmed out by public auction. This arrangement was far from perfect, but it at least provided a framework which could be improved with fuller knowledge. The new collectors at once stumbled on a major difficulty. This was to protect the *zamindar* from unreasonable government demands on the one hand, while protecting the cultivator from extortion by the *zamindars* on the other. The essence of the problem was the '*zamindars*' secret'—of the difference between the amount collected from the peasant by the *zamindar* and the amount actually paid by him to government. Hastings, whose genius did not lie in revenue matters, never probed this secret, and it took many years of trial and error before new methods elsewhere led to new systems. Along with the new collectorates were established a network of civil courts with an appeal court in Calcutta. These measures were rounded off by a number of others. The first was a reduction of the nawab's allowance from 32 to 15 *lakhs* a year.[1] This was a direct order from the Court, but it speaks much both for Hastings's management and previous conditions that under the new system the nawab actually received more for his personal expenses than he had done under the old. The second was the removal of the treasury from Murshidabad, where it had been controlled by juniors, to Calcutta, where it could be supervised by senior servants. Lastly the nawab's household was reorganized and placed in charge of Mir Jafar's widow, Munni Begam.

There remained the commercial reforms. The ghost of the *dastaks* or free passes for the goods of the Company's servants was finally laid by their abolition in 1773. The flow of trade was stimulated by the suppression of all custom houses except at the five main centres.[2] Duties on all goods except the monopolies of salt, betel-nut, and tobacco were lowered to a uniform $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for Indian and European alike. By these measures trade was encouraged, unfair competition prevented, and extortion reduced.

Warren Hastings accomplished so much in less than three years that it is easy to claim that he accomplished all. If the reforms had really been complete the work of Cornwallis would not have been necessary. But men of the next generation like Malcolm and Elphinstone repudiated the standards of the seventies and eighties. In fact Hastings accomplished a great deal in a short space of time and beginning from a very low level. He showed what could be done by a determined and skilful man with steady support from home. But while his work marked the end of the period of the greatest abuses, it was only the beginning of really constructive administration. The emoluments of the Company's servants were as yet neither fixed nor certain; private trading and taking of presents continued under cover of outward conformity to rule. Commerce was not yet fully separated from administration. The new revenue and judicial systems were tentative and far from perfect.

[1] It was reduced from 53 to 41 *lakhs* in 1766 and to 32 in 1769.
[2] Calcutta, Hughli, Murshidabad, Patna, and Dacca.

Hastings himself, with his usual insight, compared his work at this period to an unfinished building. Another five years of constructive endeavour might indeed have made Cornwallis's mission superfluous. But as so often happens in public affairs time, the gipsy man, would not wait; instead Hastings had to face the Marathas without and Philip Francis within.

The herald of this confused and baffling period was the Regulating Act of 1773. The relations of the Company with the state will be considered separately;[1] it is only necessary for clarity here to explain the provisions which affected administration in India itself. The Act created the new post of Governor-General of Fort William in Bengal, and a council of four. The governor-general was given a superintending authority over the other two presidencies and thus Calcutta became the effective capital of British India. In addition the Crown was empowered to set up a Supreme Court of Justice in Calcutta, consisting of a chief justice and three judges. Liberal salaries were provided.[2] The first governor-general, Warren Hastings, and his four councillors were named in the Act to hold office for five years. The enhanced dignity of the head of the government, however, was not marked by any increase in authority. The governor-general had one vote in his council, and a casting vote in the event of a tie. The government was still the Governor-General *and* Council and not yet the Governor-General-*in*-Council.

Hastings's internal difficulties were the direct consequence of this Act. It will now be convenient to trace them briefly before considering his external policy and internal measures. The four councillors named in the Act were General Sir John Clavering, Colonel Monson, Philip Francis, and Richard Barwell. Only the last of these was a Company's servant and resident in India. His father had been governor of Bengal; he was a typical Company's servant and after some early suspicion became a regular supporter of Hastings. Clavering was an honest, passionate, and somewhat limited man subject to strong prejudices. Monson was more able and more controlled; he had served with credit for five years in southern India and his attitude was perhaps the most impressive of the four. Neither of these two would probably have embarked upon a permanent vendetta but for the wayward genius of the last member of the quartet, Philip Francis. With real gifts of character and eminent talents he possessed a vindictiveness of temper which the Bengal climate was only too likely to encourage, and strong opinions derived from recent Indian discussions in England; he was in Macaulay's words 'a man prone to mistake malevolence for public virtue'.[3] He went to Bengal convinced of the rottenness of the administration and openly hoping for the reversion of the governor-generalship

[1] Chap. 6.

[2] The governor-general, £25,000, councillors, £10,000, the chief justice, £8,000.

[3] Francis's authorship of the *Letters of Junius* has never been conclusively proved, but general literary consent ascribes them to him.

'which I believe to be the first station in the world attainable by a subject'. It was not surprising that such a council should be subject to dissensions. What made the contest memorable was the vindictive skill with which Francis achieved ascendancy over two colleagues in order to thwart the governor-general and the tempered tenacity and resource with which Hastings countered his efforts. Both sides would have been more than human if they had never fallen below the highest levels of conduct during the struggle, and both sides had their full share of humanity.

The three non-resident councillors arrived in Calcutta in October 1774, and immediately joined issue with their chief on the manner of their reception. For two years Hastings found himself steadily outvoted in his council and unable to use his casting vote. Many of his measures were reversed and a less resilient or more sensitive man would have broken down under the strain. But he held on grimly and it was the opposition which broke. In September 1776 Colonel Monson died; the bitter debates on every question continued, but the decision went with the governor-general's casting vote. Early in 1777 Hastings's agent in England, misinterpreting ambiguous instructions, reported his offer to resign. Clavering was appointed to succeed him, but Hastings repudiated his agent and was supported by the Supreme Court. The strain of this episode was perhaps too much for Clavering for he died in August of the same year. To Monson succeeded Wheler who at first generally voted with Francis, and to Clavering Sir Eyre Coote in 1779, who though difficult of temper, never fell under Francis's spell. An attempted accommodation in 1780 lead to a duel in which Francis was disabled, and shortly afterwards, disappointed in his ambition of becoming governor-general himself or at least of displacing Hastings, he returned to England. Hastings had regained general control from the time of Monson's death in 1776, but acrimonious debates with their strain and constant burden of anxiety continued until Francis actually left. Even then Hastings knew that his enmity would pursue him in England. It was thus only during the last five years of his governorship that Hastings experienced something like undisputed supremacy, and by that time he had grown too weary to enjoy it. He had come through the fire, but not unscathed by the flames. These facts should be remembered in judging Hastings's acts as a whole. The climax of the whole struggle was the case of Raja Nand Kumar. In March 1775 Nand Kumar accused Hastings of accepting a large bribe from Munni Begam in return for her appointment as guardian of the young Nawab Mubarak-ud-daula.[1] The charge was welcomed by the majority, who immediately resolved 'that there is no species of peculation from which the governor-general has thought it reasonable to abstain'. Hastings refused to meet his accuser in council and dissolved the meeting, whereupon the majority ordered him to repay the amount into the Company's treasury. Hastings now brought a charge of con-

[1] Rs. 354,105.

spiracy against Nand Kumar. While this was pending Nand Kumar was arrested at the instance of a Calcutta merchant on a charge of forgery unconnected with the previous controversy. He was tried before the new Supreme Court, found guilty, and executed. Thereafter the charges against Hastings were dropped and never revived.

This case has exercised the ingenuity of commentators ever since, and it is unlikely that a full explanation will ever be forthcoming. The one thing which seems certain is that there was a miscarriage of justice for which the blame cannot be fastened on any one man. Here we must confine ourselves to noticing a few salient points. Forgery was not a crime punishable by death in the current criminal law of Bengal derived from the Muslim code, and the application of English penalties in Indian cases was opposed to a well-established Indian legal tradition. The Supreme Court had not been six months in the country and possibly acted in ignorance of the prevalent opinion; thus far Nand Kumar was unfortunate. On the other hand the charge of forgery would have come up against Nand Kumar at the time it did even if he had preferred no charge against Hastings. It is at least arguable that Nand Kumar played the game of the majority as an ensurance against the unknown risks of the Supreme Court. The majority failed to make any effort on Nand Kumar's behalf after his sentence, and callously watched him go to his death. The Supreme Court was a patently independent body as its later proceedings showed; in order to prove improper influence by Hastings it would be necessary to prove that he had tampered not only with Chief Justice Impey, but also with three other judges, or that the three judges were wholly subservient to Impey, which they were known not to be. There is no evidence that Hastings had anything to do with the case against Nand Kumar, on the one hand, and no sign of any magnanimous plea to the Court for a commutation of the death sentence to one of imprisonment on the other. There the matter must rest, a mystery to be solved only when the hidden motives of the chief actors are laid bare. Historically the incident is the supreme example of the absurdity and injustice of attempting to apply English legal methods to Indian conditions. The Supreme Court wished to impress on the Indian mind the seriousness of the crime of forgery; it actually very successfully convinced men that it was dangerous to attack the governor-general.

The new council was Hastings's major embarrassment, but the Supreme Court was also a cause for anxiety. The avowed purpose of the Court was to administer justice to the Company's servants and to deal with complaints against them. But the extent of its jurisdiction was undefined, its sense of dignity and its appetite for power robust, and its members quite impervious to the special conditions in which they had to work. In consequence the Court appeared arbitrary and unpredictable to Indian eyes, interfering and capricious to those of the Company's officers. Friction with the government culminated in the Patna case of 1777–9 and the Kassijura case of 1779–80. The coun-

cil denied the jurisdiction of the court over the Raja of Kassijura and the court accused the council of contempt of court. Hastings attempted to break the deadlock by inducing Impey to accept the presidency of Sadr Diwani Adalat or Company's court of appeal. The device had great practical advantages, for it solved the problem of clashing jurisdictions and averted the danger of the establishment of a kind of administrative law over and above the accepted law of the land. But it involved contradictions and practical difficulties which the opponents of both men did not fail to point out. In 1782 Impey was recalled and left India the next year. An attempt to impeach him four years later broke down on the first charge. Impey was headstrong, obstinate, and unimaginative, but he was a man of integrity as well as ability On Impey's side this episode was an honest attempt to mend evils largely caused by his own difficult temper. It is significant that though the double system was restored, there was never again enough friction to generate an equal amount of heat.

We may now turn to Hastings's foreign policy. His policy was throughout a defensive one. He was at first concerned with the defence of Bengal and Bihar. The Regulating Act made him responsible for the Company's dominions throughout India, and in that capacity he found himself saddled with conflicts with the Marathas in the west, and the Nizam and Mysore in the south, with whose inception he had nothing to do. The keynote of the Company's attitude was defensive; they were well aware that wars absorbed revenue and so reduced their annual investment. They were always ready to suspect their servants of hoping to enrich themselves with the spoils of conquered provinces. But the application of this policy involved two very real difficulties. The first arose from the confused state of Indian politics. Power was uncertain, jurisdiction undefined, and successions disputed all over India. The north lived under the shadow of a return of the Afghans. The emperor had nearly all of the rights and hardly any of the powers of government. Hyderabad, Mysore, and the Marathas had all been subject to disputed succession and civil commotion. At no point were the Company's boundaries clearly defined either by physical features or the presence of a stable power beyond the official line. It was therefore not possible to sit back and adopt a rigid policy of non-interference. There must be active concern in neighbours' affairs for fear of what the next-door-neighbour-but-one might do. The second difficulty was the complement of the first. The Indian rulers were quite as aware of their own insecurity as the Company itself. They had also as high an opinion of the Company's military prowess. The Company's aid was therefore the refuge of every state which thought itself threatened, or of any state nursing ambitious designs against a neighbour. The Company's concern in its neighbours' affairs was thus fully matched by the neighbours' interest in the disposition of the Company. The handling of such a situation without major commitments in Indian politics would have required all the talents of Hastings at his strongest and

most clear sighted. In fact he had to cope with situations which others had created, superintend two unwilling presidencies, who were also subject to direct interference from London, and at a critical moment to face the complications of European war as well. On the whole Hastings must be given the credit not only for preserving British India intact in the face of difficulty and great peril, but also from refraining from further interference in the affairs of the Indian states.

Until late 1774 Hastings was only responsible for Bengal and Bihar. Clive's settlement of 1765, by which Shuja-ud-daula of Oudh and Shah Alam at Allahabad were the twin buffers to absorb the shocks of possible Afghan and Maratha collisions, had worked well for five years. No Afghan appeared and the Marathas were recovering from Panipat. In 1769, however, the Marathas recrossed the Narbada. Two years later they induced Shah Alam to return under their protection to Delhi, where the death of Najib-ud-daula had produced a political vacuum. The price was the cession of Kora and Allahabad. This imperial action, while justifiable from Shah Alam's point of view,[1] exposed Oudh to Maratha raids and uncovered the flank of the Company. The Marathas immediately raided Rohilkhand, whose ruler Hafiz Rahmat Khan applied to Shuja-ud-daula for help. Thus Hastings found himself both threatened with the passing of a key fortress out of friendly hands, and asked for help by an ally who was himself being importuned by a state threatened by the common enemy of all three. At a stroke the Company's interests were extended to a point 800 miles from Calcutta. Out of this situation grew the Rohilla war of 1774.

Rohilkhand was a fertile tract lying to the north-west of Oudh between the Ganges and the Kumaon hills. Its population was mainly Hindu, but since 1740 it had been overrun and now was ruled by migrant Afghans of the Rohilla tribe and Pathans who had originally quitted their homeland before the sword of Nādir Shah. Shuja-ud-daula agreed in 1772 to assist the Rohillas if attacked by the Marathas in return for a payment of 40 *lakhs*. The next year the Marathas returned, were faced by the nawab supported by a British brigade, and retired. The Rohillas then evaded payment. In September 1773 Hastings concluded the treaty of Benares with Shuja. Allahabad and Kora were ceded to him in return for a payment of 50 *lakhs* of rupees; in addition over 2 *lakhs* a month were to be paid for the British brigade when used in the defence of the nawab's territories. A secret article pledged the use of the brigade against the Rohillas, when called on, in return for another 40 *lakhs*. At the same time the payment of the emperor's subsidy or tribute was formally stopped.[2] The following February the call came. The Rohillas were overthrown at Miranpur Katra, and their dominions incorporated with Oudh, except for a fragment which was allowed to survive at Rampur. Hastings's object was to increase his security by augmenting the buffer state of Oudh, whose

[1] T. G. P. Spear, *Twilight of the Mughuls*, pp. 18–19.
[2] Twenty-six *lakhs* a year. It had not actually been paid since 1770.

control was secured by the presence of a British brigade. Shuja-ud-daula was anxious to exploit the Company's support to increase his dominions; between the two motives the Rohillas were sacrificed. A further financial motive on the part of Hastings is clearly visible; in one year he obtained more than a *crore* of rupees (£1,125,000) for the Company's treasury. In remedying the threatened loss of Allahabad Hastings showed courage and resource. The emperor could not complain of the loss of payments from a power whose gift of a province he had offered to an enemy. In strengthening Oudh he was again on firm ground. There remains the support of Shuja against the Rohillas with whom the Company had no quarrel. This proved to be one of the principal indictments against Hastings at his impeachment. Here it is sufficient to say that whatever the merits of the case, it was no more high handed than some of the acts of Wellesley or some of the later proceedings in Sind. It was not so much the act as the actor which made the Rohilla war a *cause célèbre* of Anglo-Indian history. We may here complete the story of Hastings's political dealings with Oudh by noting the transfer of Benares from Oudh to the Company by the council majority in 1775.

Hastings had next to deal with the far more complicated question of the Marathas in western India. Here he had to reckon with the intractable temper of the Bombay Council and the unpredictable twists of Maratha internal politics. Bombay and Madras approved of every part of the Regulating Act except that which concerned themselves, the superintendence of Calcutta. They also retained the right of direct correspondence with London so that, in the not improbable event of disagreement with Calcutta, they had, as it were, a private wire to the directors by which they could state their case. The other element in the situation was the divisions in the Maratha camp, where the tortuous intrigues of Poona were only matched by the shifts and balancings of the commanders in the field. Maratha power had seemed, in the fifties, to be sweeping forward to fill the vacuum being created by the steady ebb of Mughul vigour. The dream was ended at Panipat in 1761, where the flower of the Maratha array with its leader, the Peshwa's uncle, went down before the Afghan Ahmad Shah, and after which the Peshwa himself died of vexation in June. His son was a minor, and from the disputes which ensued sprang directly the conditions which led to British intervention. The decade which followed saw the young Peshwa's rise to manhood, his assertion of independent power at Poona, and consequent dismissal of his uncle Raghunath Rao (popularly known as Raghoba),[1] and the rise of Nana Fadnavis,[2] chief accountant from 1763. Under his vigorous lead the Marathas recrossed the Chambal in 1769; but three years later he died, confiding his brother Narayan Rao to the care of Raghunath. Within two years

[1] In Indian circles he was usually referred to as Dada Sahib.

[2] His real name was Balaji Janardhan. *Phadnavis* or *Fadnavis* was the title of his office.

Narayan had been murdered and Raghunath had been driven from Poona by a council of regency acting in the name of Narayan's posthumous son. Raghunath was a brave but ill-advised and unlucky man; it was his misfortune that his star came into conjunction at this moment with that of the Regulating Act. On his expulsion from Poona Raghunath turned for support to the British in Bombay. The Bombay Council, without considering their obligations to Calcutta, demanded Salsette and Bassein as the price of support. They were refused, but they nevertheless seized Salsette on the rumour of Portuguese action. In March 1775 the council concluded the treaty of Surat with Raghunath, by which they promised 2,500 English troops to restore Raghunath to Poona in return for Salsette and Bassein, the expenses of the campaign with 6 *lakhs* in addition, and a promise to refrain from raids in Bengal and the Carnatic.

At this stage the Calcutta Council interfered. With unwonted harmony they united in condemning the Bombay action. But the majority then ordered the withdrawal of the forces which had already gained some success, while Hastings, with perhaps some fellow-feeling for the man on the spot, was in favour of recognizing the *fait accompli*. Colonel Upton was sent to make a settlement. In 1776 the Surat treaty was replaced by the treaty of Purandhar by which peace was restored on the payment of 12 *lakhs* with the retention of Salsette; the cause of Raghunath was abandoned, and he himself pensioned. Again interference occurred, this time from London. The directors, in spite of all their censures of interference with weak states, now advocated intervention in a strong one. Hastings was authorized to revive the Surat treaty and in 1778 used his casting vote to sanction a fresh patronage of Raghunath. For this error of judgement Hastings paid dearly in four years of inconclusive war at a time when the British power in India was about to be tested to its utmost. An overconfident march towards Poona ended in the envelopment of the army and the disgraceful convention of Wadgaon (13 January 1779). The price of retreat was the restoration of all conquests, the stopping of the Bengal force, and the handing over of all hostages. Carnac and Cockburn had, of course, no power to agree to such terms. They were repudiated and the war went on, but the British never recovered from its effects. The war continued to the end an affair of shifts and turns lacking an overall plan and any competent direction.

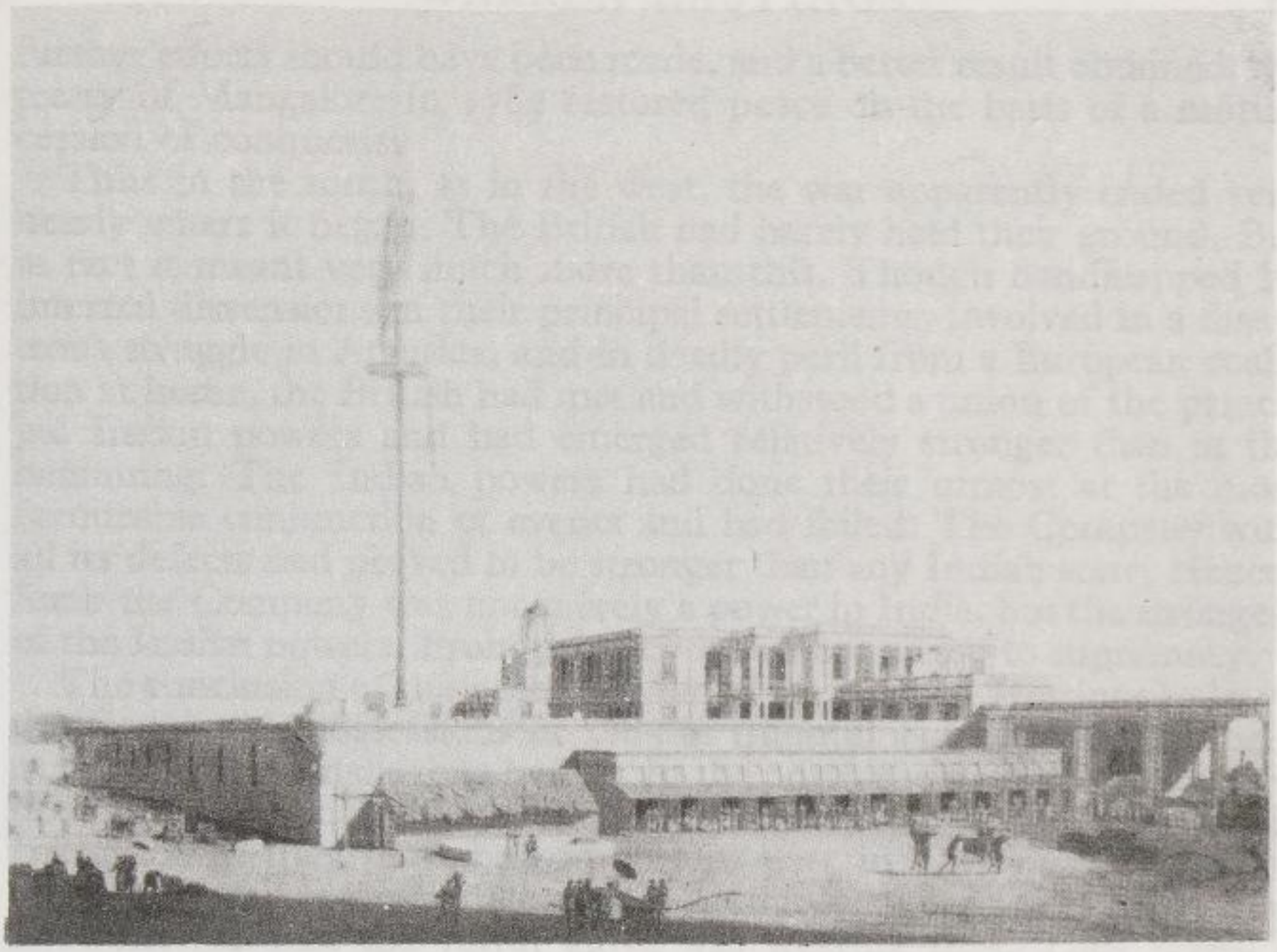
At the start Hastings had dispatched a force (under Leslie, later succeeded by Goddard) which was to march across central India and provide the decisive factor in the campaign.[1] It arrived in Surat in February 1779 after a brilliant march. But the feats which win fame do not always win wars. One month earlier Wadgaon had crippled the power and ruined the prestige of Bombay. Goddard's force proved to

[1] This was less hazardous than might appear at first sight. The road was open to Allahabad, and thence the route lay through the dominions of the Bhonsla who was friendly to the British.

be a makeweight to restore the balance instead of the decisive factor in the campaign. The war dragged on for two more years, with military action and diplomacy interwoven in almost equal proportions. Goddard was successful in Gujarat, but his attempted march on Poona was repulsed with heavy loss. Popham's escalade of Gwalior was an episode of brilliance rather than decision. But in the course of 1781 Madhu Rao Sindia made peace after suffering defeat. He now acted as an intermediary with Nana, having his own views about the future of the Poona government. The treaty of Salbai, in May 1782, ended the unhappy war. The Peshwa pensioned Raghunath, the Gaekwar's lands in Gujarat and Sindia's west of the Jumna were restored, together with all territories occupied since the treaty of Purandhar. In other words Salsette was the sole dividend of eight years of war and diplomacy which began by an aggressive interference in Indian politics on the part of the Bombay Council. In this mingled frustration and impolicy too many took part for it to be possible to fix the full responsibility. The Bombay Council, with their gratuitous support of a Maratha political refugee and their ineffective measures, must perhaps bear the chief burden of blame. The directors added contradictory instructions and various soldiers military blunders. Hastings's contribution was an error of judgement in sanctioning a renewal of the war, and thereafter measures like the dispatch of Goddard's and Popham's forces, and much skilful diplomacy in dividing his foes, which restored the fortunes of the day. Events in India at this time cannot be judged from the importance attached to them in public discussions in England. Prejudice, financial interest, *amour propre*, and party spirit combined to focus attention on some periods and places to the exclusion of others equally worthy of attention. Thus Bengal affairs were much more canvassed than those of Madras where comparable conditions continued for longer, and the Rohilla war excited far greater criticism than the Maratha, which lasted many times as long and was begun less excusably. The historian's task is to restore, as far as may be, the balance of truth disturbed by propaganda and controversy. Looked at in this light, the first Maratha war must be regarded as unnecessary in its inception and unfortunate in its handling.

Just as the Maratha war was proving an embarrassment Hastings found himself confronted with the supreme crisis of his career. As with the Marathas, the occasion was not of his making and we must judge him by the manner in which he met it rather than by the mode of its occurrence. The War of American Independence began in 1775; in 1778 it developed into a European coalition bent upon the ruin of British overseas power. The strain of the American war reduced the possibility of reinforcing India, and the hostility of France and Spain rendered the dispatch of any help difficult. British sea-power was strained to its uttermost, and France was thus provided with an opportunity of recovering lost ground. Hastings met the situation in characteristic fashion. On hearing the news of the surrender of

General Burgoyne at Saratoga during the debate on the Maratha war he remarked: 'if it be really true that the British arms and influence have suffered so severe a check in the western world, it is the more incumbent upon those who are charged with the interest of Great Britain in the East to exert themselves for the retrieval of the national honour'. But worse was to follow. For many years the Madras Presidency had been in a chronic state of misrule. There had never been another Clive to carry reforms there with a strong hand, nor had the directors exerted themselves to this end as they had in Bengal. Less was at stake and the evils were less obvious though no less real. In 1775 Lord Pigot was sent out to effect the restoration of Tanjore and the reform of the service, and next year was imprisoned by his own council. One unnecessary war with the new ruler of Mysore had already occurred. Though the Nizam, the Marathas, and Haidar Ali of Mysore were mutually suspicious and ready to injure one another, the Madras Council by its tactlessness allowed them to form a coalition, and by its folly failed to provide for the consequent emergency. In July 1780 Haidar Ali burst into the Carnatic; Baillie's brigade was destroyed, Munro of Baksar retreated with ignominy; within a few months Arcot had fallen and the whole province been overrun. But Hastings was not dismayed. He set about reinforcing Madras on the one hand and dividing his foes on the other. He suspended the Governor of Madras and sent Sir Eyre Coote (now commander-in-chief in Bengal) to Madras with all possible supplies and reinforcements. In the following January he dispatched Pearce on his overland march from Bengal to Madras. At the same time his diplomacy was active. The Raja of Berar was detached in central India and Sindia in the north. In 1782 peace was made with the whole Maratha confederacy (as we have seen). There then remained Haidar Ali to deal with, for the Nizam was never a formidable foe. Coote checked Haidar at Porto Novo in July 1781. He then joined Pearce north of Madras and re-established mastery over the Mysore forces in two more pitched battles, Pollilore and Solingar. The war now assumed a more equal aspect. Haidar Ali had met his match on land, but he was assisted by the arrival of a French fleet under the fighting Admiral de Suffren. In sixteen months he fought five battles with the brave but less skilful Hughes, which though indecisive in detail, gave the French for some months the freedom of south Indian waters. The great harbour of Trincomali, newly taken from the Dutch, was captured, and a body of French troops landed which joined Haidar in taking Cuddalore. The great Bussy was on the way, but he only arrived after long delays in April 1783. By then the moment for a decisive stroke had passed. Coote and Haidar were both dead, and Haidar's son Tipu had marched to the west coast in order to besiege Mangalore. Madras affairs were now in the capable hands of Lord Macartney, while the news of the peace in Europe made it clear that Tipu could no longer hope for a decisive result. Both sides were exhausted, and though Hastings thought that



a. Fort St. George, Madras

Government House, Calcutta

further efforts should have been made, and a better result obtained, the treaty of Mangalore in 1784 restored peace on the basis of a mutual cession of conquests.

Thus in the south, as in the west, the war apparently ended very nearly where it began. The British had barely held their ground. But in fact it meant very much more than this. Though handicapped by internal dissensions in their principal settlements, involved in a disastrous struggle in America, and in deadly peril from a European coalition at home, the British had met and withstood a union of the principal Indian powers and had emerged relatively stronger than at the beginning. The Indian powers had done their utmost at the most favourable conjunction of events and had failed. The Company with all its defects had proved to be stronger than any Indian state. Henceforth the Company was not merely a power in India, but the strongest of the Indian powers. From primacy it was but a step to supremacy.

The conclusion of the peace of Mangalore enabled Hastings to leave the Company's possessions in 1785 as tranquil as he had found them as well as far stronger than before. In the north the cases of the Begams of Oudh and Chait Singh of Benares have still to be mentioned. Inasmuch as they played an important part in Hastings's impeachment, they will receive fuller notice; here it is enough to say that they both showed that the velvet glove was wearing thin. They reveal a coarsening of Hastings's fibre, which, considering all that he had gone through is hardly surprising, but which is nevertheless undeniable. Pressing financial need combined with fading scruples united to produce incidents which it has become ever more difficult to justify with the passage of time.

Hastings's governorship was marked by other features than those of war and politics. His long residence in Bengal in the shadow of the Mughul cultural tradition had kindled oriental tastes and allowed time for the acquisition of oriental learning. Hastings with his air of authority, his long tenure of office, his cultural interests, and his understanding of the people, came nearer to the heart of India than any of the other pre-Mutiny rulers. His name became a legend, passing into popular folklore, his exploits were celebrated in popular verse. Almost alone of the early rulers, he showed an awareness of cultural as well as political and commercial issues. He sought to understand Indian culture as a basis for sound Indian administration. Hastings knew Persian (the diplomatic language) and Bengali (the local language) well and had a working knowledge of Urdu with some Arabic. He encouraged Halhed in his work on Hindu law, based on a Persian translation from the Sanskrit made by ten pundits. He encouraged William Wilkins in his Sanskrit studies and patronized his translation of the *Gita*. When Sir William Jones, already a Persian and Arabic scholar, joined the Supreme Court, Hastings encouraged his interest in Sanskrit and supported the foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784. He was equally interested in Islamic culture and

founded the Muslim *Madrasah* or College of Arabic studies at Calcutta in 1781. He encouraged Rennell in the production of his *Bengal Atlas* (1781) and sent two expeditions to Tibet. By his patronage of learning and the arts, by his political vigour and subtlety, and by his continuance of the traditional methods of administration by means of corruption kept within bounds, Hastings placed himself in the line of the great Indian monarchs. No British ruler before Lawrence was as much in tune with the country he governed and no one was better loved.

Hastings's achievement may be summed up by saying that he proved an effective warden of the Company's marches during a period of unexampled difficulty. He faced his external enemies with unflinching courage and unfailing resource, and his internal opponents with extraordinary patience and firmness. He laid the foundation of the administrative structure upon which others were to rear a stately edifice, and through all this activity he found time to cultivate that interest in cultural things which was to lead in time to a still greater return from the Indian side. He found Calcutta a counting-house and left it a seat of empire. But having said so much we must not hide the other side of the medal. His revenue measures were tentative and far from wholly successful; his political skill was marred by a certain lack of moral tone and a streak of hardness, more Prussian than English, which grew with the years. His correspondence developed a speciousness and lack of candour which became habitual. If inflexible purpose marked the course of his actions, he also showed at times a cold hostility which could freeze to an icy hate. The thin pursed lips which set off the intellectual brow tell their tale of suppressed feeling and smouldering resentments. It could almost be said that he never said a foolish thing or ever did a generous one. This aloof and self-centred quality created suspicion in many who met him; even Barwell began by distrusting him. In his personal administration he did little to deserve the censure of the older school of Anglo-Indian historians, but neither did he deserve the encomiums of later generations. Hastings can best be understood by remembering that he went to India at the age of seventeen, that much of his early service was up-country, and that he lived through the whole period of Plassey, Mir Jafar, and Mir Kasim in Bengal. His standards were high in his own estimation, and judged by the level of the times. But they were neither the standards of the nineteenth-century administrators nor of the best men in English public life of his day. It would be as foolish to deny the fact as it would be unjust to revive prejudiced stories of exceptional turpitude. Warren Hastings is in any view a complex and puzzling character. The task of interpreting him has been made far more difficult by the controversies which his name and the passions which Bengal excited. Behind this eloquence and prejudice the real man disappeared like reality beneath the mask of *maya*. The achievement of Hastings is an established fact; his character remains something of an enigma.

NOTE ON CHAIT SINGH OF BENARES AND THE BEGAMS OF OUDH

THE cases of Chait Singh of Benares and the Begams of Oudh formed the most damaging counts against Hastings at his impeachment. It was indeed the Chait Singh case which changed the mind of Pitt and so precipitated the actual trial. Sheridan's 'Begam speech' has generally been considered the most eloquent oration delivered in Parliament. The passion and prejudice unloosed at the actual trial, however, and the hazy knowledge of Indian conditions possessed by most of the participants has resulted in the respective parties being over-blamed and over-praised to the confusion of the judgement of posterity. The most judicious accounts are those of Sir Alfred Lyall in his *Warren Hastings* (Rulers of India), H. H. Dodwell in the *Cambridge Shorter History of India*, and P. E. Roberts in his *History of British India* and in the *Cambridge History of India*, vol. v.

Chait Singh was Raja of Benares but his status was that of a *zamindar* or collector of revenue, not of a ruling prince. But he was a *zamindar* with a difference in that he had a compact territory and considerable powers. Until 1775 he was a dependent of the Nawab Wazir of Oudh, but by the treaty of that year his allegiance was transferred to the Company. His annual tribute, or the revenue which he was expected to hand over, was 22½ *lakhs* of rupees (£225,000). This was a substantial amount and may be compared with the 52 *lakhs* which constituted the Bengal provincial payment to Delhi in the early eighteenth century. On the transfer of Benares to the Company an undertaking was given that the demand would not be increased 'on any pretence whatsoever'. In 1778, when the French war combined with the Maratha and Mysore entanglements to make the British position critical, Hastings thought himself justified in demanding (not requesting) a special sum of 5 *lakhs* for war expenses. The demand was repeated in 1779 and enforced by a threat of military action. In 1780 the demand was again renewed. This time the raja sent 2 *lakhs* to Hastings as a bribe. Hastings took the 2 *lakhs* which he used for the Company's forces, but did not relax his demand. The raja was then required to furnish 2,000 horsemen, which were reduced to 1,000. When the raja produced 500 with 500 matchlockmen Hastings proceeded to Benares, determined to exact a fine of 50 *lakhs*. The raja was put under arrest in his own palace. His own troops then rose and the small British force involved was massacred owing to the accident that they had not been provided with ammunition. From then on Hastings behaved with the utmost coolness. He retired to Chunar, brought up reinforcements, recovered Benares, and drove Chait Singh from the country. His dominions were conferred upon a nephew with a tribute increased to 40 *lakhs*. Making all allowance for the necessities of a perilous situation, and the irritation of a prevaricating prince who had intrigued with the governor-general's enemies in the council, it is difficult not to regard Hastings's behaviour as both high-handed and vindictive. The Company's power was vindicated but not its good faith. Others (like Wellesley and Napier) were as high-handed without being impeached, but from the historian's point of view, the possible excess of blame by contemporaries cannot affect the issue of the actuality of guilt.

The Begams or princesses of Oudh were the mother and grandmother of the Nawab Wazir of Oudh, Asaf-ud-daula. They held valuable *jagirs* or grants of land and had inherited other wealth under the will of Shuja-ud-daula. The nawab was in chronic arrears with his subsidy payments to the

Company and turned a wistful eye towards this family endowment. In 1775 the widow of Shuja, at the behest of the British resident, agreed to pay 30 *lakhs* to her son in addition to 25 already given (approximately £560,000) on condition that both he and the Company desisted from further demands. Hastings opposed the giving of this pledge but was outvoted by the council. In 1781 Asaf-ud-daula, being hard-pressed for money by Hastings who was himself hard-pressed for public funds, suggested that he might be released from his undertaking and Hastings consented. But the nawab was soon daunted by the vigour of the ladies' remonstrances and desired to draw back. The rest of the story is one of relentless pressure to keep the nawab up to the mark, exercised both on the nawab himself and on two successive British residents. (Middleton, his own nominee, and Bristow a Francis man.) British troops were sent to support the nawab, the eunuch stewards of the Begams were imprisoned for nearly a year and subjected to fetters, starvation, and the threat of the lash. In February 1782 Middleton wrote 'no further rigour than that which I exerted could have been used against females in this country', and in June Bristow added the opinion of the officer commanding the troops, 'all that force could do has been done'. By these means 100 *lakhs* (£1 million sterling) were eventually secured, the nawab's debts paid and the Company's finances restored.

The Begams were not left penniless, or even uncomfortable. Nor was their title to their riches quite certain. But there is no doubt that faith was broken, that the Company's government interfered in what was essentially a domestic and intimate situation in the nawab's own household, that the Begams were severely treated and their dependants bullied and ill-used. There also seems no doubt that Hastings's was the moving spirit egging on reluctant British residents and officers. When due allowance has been made for the dire necessities of Hastings's position at the time and the strains to which he was subjected, the fact remains that in both these cases Hastings sank below not only modern codes of conduct but the accepted Indian standards of the time.

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CHAPTER 6

The Company and the State

THE East India Company, which found itself the master of Bengal in 1757, was the result of the fusion, in 1702 (completed in 1708), of the rival 'old' and 'new' Companies, which had for a time disputed the English trade with India, each with the backing of a royal charter. 'The United Company of Merchants of England trading with the East Indies' was henceforth the only body of English merchants entitled to carry on the English trade. It was governed in London by a court of twenty-four directors, who were elected annually by the body of shareholders, known as the Court of Proprietors. The working capital of the Company known as East India stock was provided by the proprietors as shareholders on the joint-stock plan. The profits were steady and the annual dividend declared between 1711 and 1755 varied between 8 and 10 per cent. The day-to-day administration was carried on by the directors, usually referred to as 'the Court', which for this purpose was divided into a number of committees.

In India the Company was essentially a commercial concern, and any political activities were incidental to its commerce. The Company administered the solitary British possession of Bombay and held its other factories and settlements under grants from the local powers. The three main settlements of Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay were administered separately by local councils dealing direct with the home authorities. In each settlement there was a hierarchy of merchants rising through the grades of writer and factor to those of junior and senior merchants. The council consisted of senior merchants and had as its head a president who was also governor of the settlement. These councils controlled all the commercial operations, which consisted mainly in selling English goods in the local markets and with the proceeds and the help of bullion exported from England making up the 'investment' of goods for dispatch to England. The salaries paid were nominal,[1] it being understood that the Company's servants were free to augment them by engaging in the internal trade in India or in the external trade to the Far East. The one thing which they were forbidden was to infringe the Company's monopoly by engaging in the trade with England. The method of appointment was nomination by the directors, writers usually going to India at the age of fifteen.

The even tenor of the Company's merchants' way was first disturbed

[1] The annual salary of a writer was £5, of a factor £15, and of a junior merchant £30. The chief of Dacca in 1744 received £40. L. S. S. O'Malley, *The Indian Civil Service*, p. 9.

by the French wars which began in 1744. It is obvious that such a system was bound to be shaken to its roots by the sudden acquisition of political power in Bengal. This brought with it previously undreamt of opportunities of making fortunes. Having the whole weight of political power within the state at their back, and often themselves holding important political positions, these men found easy roads to fortune in three ways. They received presents and considerations for favours public and private, past, present, and to come, they held lucrative contracts, such as the salt monopoly or the supply of clothing to the troops, and they enjoyed unfair competition with the local merchants as a result of the *dastak* system started by Mir Jafar and confirmed by Vansittart's Council at the cost of war with Mir Kasim. Parliamentary reports showed that between 1757 and 1766, £2,169,665 had been given to the Company's servants in the form of presents (without counting Clive's *jagir*) and £3,770,833 paid in compensation for losses incurred.[1]

This sudden affluence of the Company's Bengal servants had a variety of results. It started a stream of returned 'Indians' to England who became the 'Nabobs' of eighteenth-century England, scandalizing society by their ostentation and creating jealousy by their wealth. Their influence began to be felt by 1760 and they were a parliamentary force by 1767. The dramatist Foote guyed them in his play *The Nabob* in 1770. Politicians did not see why the state should not share in this new-found wealth and moralists began to doubt the means by which it was acquired; Burke was later to become their spokesman (while dipping the family finger into the Indian dish). At the same time the cost of frequent campaigns raised expenses and the maladministration reduced revenue. The Company therefore found itself not nearly so well off as its servants. But when retrenchment was proposed it met two obstacles within the Company itself. There was a reluctance on the part of directors to take strong action since those concerned in irregularities were their own nominees, often their own relations or connexions, or the clients of highly placed persons in England whom they did not wish to offend. The directors were therefore bold in exhortation but hesitant of action. Similarly, while firm in deprecating the assumption of further political responsibility they were apt to condone the accomplished fact if it promised an increase of resources. There was, secondly, an eagerness on the part of the proprietors (or shareholders) to share in the new prosperity, which took the form of a demand for increased dividends. In 1766 the dividend was raised to 10 per cent., and the next year to 12½ per cent.

The total effect of these influences was to produce the financial crisis which led to the passing of the Regulating Act in 1773. In 1766 Parliament first concerned itself with Indian questions and the demand was voiced that the Crown should take over the Company's possessions. This opposition was bought off in 1767 by an undertaking to pay

[1] *Reports of the House of Commons 1772*, vol. iii, pp. 311–12.

£400,000 a year to the state in return for the continued enjoyment of the Company's new possessions and revenues.[1] This extra burden proved too great in the then condition of the Company. The directors in vain endeavoured to avert disaster. Their first attempt was the dispatch of Vansittart to Bengal from Madras in 1760, but he was overborne by the majority of the council. The next measure was the dispatch of Clive for his second term in 1765, but the effort died away with his return in 1767. In 1769 three 'supervisors', Vansittart, Forde, and Scrafton, were dispatched with plenary powers, but their ship was never heard of after leaving the Cape of Good Hope. In 1772 Hastings was appointed Governor of Bengal with a mandate for reform, but a financial crisis had already arrived. The court was compelled to ask Lord North for a loan of a million pounds to avert bankruptcy. The mounting public criticism now found vent in the appointment of select and secret parliamentary committees which produced between them eighteen hostile reports. These were the prelude to the assertion of parliamentary control over the Company's affairs, which led on, step by step, to the assumption of full sovereignty by the Crown in 1858. We can trace three broad themes in this process; the separation of trade from administration within the Company itself, the gradual assertion of state control over the political affairs of the Company itself in India, and a similar process in the control of the Company in London. The main steps of these processes can be followed in a series of great parliamentary enactments, which commence with the Regulating Act of 1773, continue with Pitt's India Act of 1784 and the periodical Charter Acts of 1793, 1813, 1833, and 1853, and end with the final Act of 1858. We shall consider the first two of these measures in turn and then trace the three themes mentioned above to their conclusions.

In 1773 two Acts were passed. The first relieved the financial embarrassments of the Company by granting a loan of £1,400,000 at 4 per cent. interest. The second was the Regulating Act, so called because it was an Act 'to regulate' the affairs of the Company in India. The Act first dealt with the affairs of the Company in England. The tumultuous proceedings of the Court of Proprietors were restrained. Rival factions made and unmade directors at the annual elections, and shares were bought in order to obtain voting power;[2] Indian policy was influenced and sometimes determined by the intrigues of city groups wholly devoid of responsibility. The qualification for a vote in the Proprietors' Court was raised from £500 to £1,000. Annual elections of directors were replaced by the election of six directors a year for a four-year term with a disqualification for a year before election

[1] Clive believed that the grant of the *diwani* of Bengal to the Company in 1765 would bring £2 million a year to the Company as revenue surplus.

[2] The practice of dividing holdings of East India stock in order to increase the number of votes in the Court of Proprietors was known as 'splitting votes'. See L. Sutherland, *E. India Co. and the State.*

for a second term. This ended the scandal by which a body of commercial shareholders had dictated policy in a great country. The Act then dealt with the Bengal government. A Governor-General of Fort William in Bengal was appointed for five years, together with four councillors who were all named in the Act. Future appointments were to be made by the Company. The Governor-General was given supervisory authority over the other two presidencies and thus the first step towards unitary control was taken. Finally, a Supreme Court consisting of a chief justice and three puisne judges was set up.

The importance of the Regulating Act is that it marks the first assertion of parliamentary control over the Company and registers the first concern of Parliament for the welfare of the people of India. But in itself it was a temporizing measure full of defects which contributed much to the difficulties of Warren Hastings as the first Governor-General. The Governor-General had no casting vote and so could be overruled by his council as Philip Francis and his friends succeeded in doing for two years. The general superintendence of the other presidencies was vague and no provision was made for its enforcement. The Supreme Court was neither given any definition of the law it was to administer or of those to whom it was to apply. Once the machine had been set going the government in England could only intervene again by further legislation. Apart from the assertion of the principle of responsibility the best thing that can be said of the Act was that it increased contact with India and knowledge of its affairs by the dispatch of mature judges and councillors to the East.

The Regulating Act was the first measure passed in a period of more than twenty years during which Indian affairs were a major topic in the British Parliament. Its defects were soon manifest, but remedial measures were delayed by the crisis of the American War of Independence. In 1780 the Company's privileges ran out under the Act of 1744, but the government of Lord North, still reeling under the shock of Saratoga, was unwilling to bring forward any radical proposal. Instead the Company's privileges were extended to 1791 with three years' notice from that date. The Company's dividend was at the same time limited to 8 per cent. But Parliament was not now to be thus put off. In 1781 two parliamentary committees were appointed, one presided over by Burke, to examine the administration of justice, and one by Dundas, to consider the causes of the wars in the Carnatic. The prophet of reform and its practical manager both found congenial subjects for their labours. At the same time Lord North's ministry was tottering to its fall, ushering in a period of political instability which only ended with Pitt's victory at the general election of 1784. For the first time India became a dominant issue of English politics. It provided a main political issue during the Fox-North coalition in 1783 and provided King George III with an excuse for dismissing the ministry at the end of the year. It formed the subject-matter of the first measure of Pitt's long ministry and made his reputation both as

an administrator and legislator. It continued to agitate Parliament through the years of Warren Hastings's impeachment, providing opportunities for the assertion of moral principle and the expression of political idealism. England inoculated herself with Indian wealth to develop within her the anti-body of political integrity.

Three constructive proposals emerged from this period. The first was Dundas's Bill, a centralizing measure which never received serious discussion. The second was Fox's India Bill, the occasion of the fall of the Fox-North coalition. Fox proposed to supersede both the proprietors and the directors with seven commissioners appointed by the Crown and irremovable except by an address from either House of Parliament; the leading shareholders were to be represented by nine assistant directors. The solid objection to this proposal was that it would have transferred the whole patronage as well as the direction of policy to seven persons knowing nothing of India, owing their appointment to political influence, and subject to political pressure. Political patronage would have replaced the personal jobbery of the directors and India might well have become the scene of greater corruption than before.

The third measure was Pitt's India Bill which actually passed into law in August 1784. Pitt rejected the outright taking over of the management of the Company's Indian possessions by the Crown, which had first been proposed by Clive in 1759. He equally rejected the crude subordination of Company to Parliament proposed by Fox. He left open the question of the sovereignty of the Company's possessions in India. At the same time it was clear that the Company was incapable of meeting its new responsibilities without assistance and supervision. Pitt's remedy was a double or joint government of Company and Crown. The directors themselves were left in being and retained control of commerce and patronage. But the Court of Proprietors lost the power of modifying or rescinding any proceeding of the directors which had been approved by the new Board of Control. This meant in effect that their power to influence political decisions in India was ended; the proprietors thus passed unhonoured from the Indian political scene. It was in the political sphere that the new dual system was effective. The directors themselves, unhindered by the Court of Proprietors except in the matter of their election, formed one-half of the partnership and the new Board of Control the other. This body consisted of six unpaid privy councillors, one of whom was the president with a casting vote. In fact, under the masterful direction of Dundas and with the backing of Pitt, the president soon became in effect minister for the affairs of the East India Company. The board had no patronage and did not interfere in commercial matters, but it had power 'to superintend, direct and control all acts, operations and concerns which in anywise relate to the civil or military government or the revenues of the British territorial possessions in the East Indies'. The board approved all dispatches (which it could modify or reject) and

could even insist on its own orders being transmitted without the directors' consent. In matters of secrecy the board dealt with a secret committee of three directors whose proceedings were unknown to the rest of the Court.

In India the same system of indirect control was applied and there was a similar tightening up. The Governor-General was appointed by the directors but could be recalled by the Crown as well as the Court. The experiment of appointing English public men to the governor-general's council was abandoned, and the council itself reduced to three of whom the commander-in-chief was to be one. The control of Calcutta over the subordinate presidencies in matters of war, revenue, and diplomacy was tightened, and the local councils were in their turn reduced to three members each. At the same time the Act declared that 'to pursue schemes of conquest and extension of dominion in India are measures repugnant to the wish, honour and policy of this nation'. The Governor-General and Council were expressly forbidden to declare war or enter into aggressive designs without the explicit authority of the Court or the secret committee. Pitt's India Act was rounded off by amending acts of which the most important gave the governor-general power to override his council and also made it possible for the offices of governor-general and commander-in-chief to be united in the same person. The first of these measures was made a condition by Lord Cornwallis of his acceptance of the office of Governor-General. It made the governor-general the effective ruler of British India under the authority of the board and the Court, and prevented any repetition of the embarrassments from which Hastings had suffered. The Governor-General *and* Council now became the Governor-General *in* Council and as such he remained until 1947.

The dual system thus set up lasted until the Mutiny in 1857. The apparent weakness of duality proved in practice to be the secret of its success. The home government at the time lacked the means for providing an efficient civil service in India. At the same time the Company unaided lacked the strength for enforcing probity and efficiency in its servants. The dual system left the administration in the hands of those who were familiar with it, but provided a supervisor at home with parliamentary backing in the shape of the Board of Control, and another in India in the person of the Governor-General whose authority was above local influence and beyond local challenge. Disputes there were, but the directors had the good sense to realize that the last word lay with the ministry of the day. Compromise was therefore the usual outcome of disagreement. Despite theoretical appearances, the partnership worked. But as the British stake in India grew, the government's influence increased and the directors' political power correspondingly declined. There were frequent compromises on appointments to the governor-generalship. The directors could block an unwanted candidate as in the case of Metcalfe. But it was only with difficulty that they secured the recall of Wellesley, and their recall of

Ellenborough in 1844 was only successful because Peel's ministry had already lost confidence in him. We can say that the essential result was to give the home government a continuous influence on, and ultimate control of, Indian policy. The days of the irresponsible exploitation of India were over; in its place the responsibility of Parliament for the government of India and the welfare of the people of India was not only clearly defined but also made possible of enforcement. The planning genius of Pitt and the practical management of Dundas were more effective than the generous rhetoric of Fox in making effective the professed idealism of Burke.

The assertion of the moral responsibility of Parliament for the welfare of India was the essential theme of the impeachment of Warren Hastings. The motives of its managers were mixed from the personal spite of Sir Philip Francis to the crusading zest of Burke, and even Burke was not free from personal rancour. Yet behind the invective and passion which accompanied it lay the conviction that moral principles must prevail in Indian as much as in British public life, and that what was wrong in the West could not be right in the East. It was this feeling which caused Pitt to withdraw that support of Hastings in the case of Chait Singh of Benares which he had given on the issue of the Rohilla war. Hastings was arraigned before the House of Lords on twenty-three charges. The proceedings opened amidst great excitement at Westminster Hall in 1787. They dragged on for six years and ended with Hastings's acquittal on all the counts. By that time the country had entered on the long French revolutionary wars and public interest had long since flagged. Though acquitted Hastings was financially crippled and debarred from further employment or public honours. He spent the rest of his long life in retirement at his beloved Daylesford, emerging finally to receive the spontaneous tribute of the Commons which rose in his honour when he finished giving evidence at its bar in connexion with the charter discussions of 1813. It must be admitted that only very rough and rather brutal justice was done, but justice of a kind there was. Though the faults of many lesser men transcended those of Hastings as his ability exceeded theirs, it was fitting that the responsibility for misgovernment and acts of high-handedness should be fixed upon the head rather than on lesser men. At the same time the greatness of his services as well as the gravity of his shortcomings required recognition. It would have been as unjust roundly to condemn him as wholly to absolve him for all the acts of his government. Justice required that he should be both blamed and praised and this was in fact what occurred though the prosecution was tainted with vindictiveness and the length of the trial imposed cruel hardship. As a form of justice the proceedings were discreditable and rang the death knell of impeachment as a legal form. But the arraignment of Hastings and the ending of all his further prospects gave warning to the Company's servants in general that no lesser man could expect his actions to go without scrutiny or his faults without reproof;

his acquittal and the parliamentary esteem which later came to him demonstrated that merit and ability in serving the state, even though speckled with wayward actions, would not go unnoticed either.

The Company's existing charter ran out in 1794 with a warning three years earlier. Consideration of the terms for the renewal of the charter involved the focusing of attention on Indian affairs in a way not known in later times. Parliamentary committees took evidence and made reports to the Houses and the subsequent debates which took place occupied much time and attracted much attention. For the rest of the Company's existence the charter was regularly renewed for twenty-year periods. What amounted to a grand inquest on Indian affairs and the conduct of the Indian government thus took place periodically. It formed the preliminary for legislative changes which can thus be conveniently distinguished and the discussions provided ample and convenient evidence of the gradually changing climate of opinion in Britain and its effect upon Indian policy. We may now pass the subsequent Charter Acts in brief review before distinguishing their effect upon the several strands of government. The Act of 1793 was passed when Pitt was at the height of his power, when Britain was just embarking upon the French revolutionary wars and when Cornwallis had just completed his first successful governor-generalship. It was in effect a vote of confidence in the new system, and in consequence the changes made were few. Consolidation, not innovation, was the key-word. The advocates of free trade and Wilberforce's plea for the countenance of Christian missionaries were both repulsed, and the Company was confirmed in its commercial privileges.

In 1813 the French wars still continued but the end was in sight. There had been alarm at Wellesley's aggressive policy with its financial repercussions and concern at the administrative shortcomings in the administrative and judicial spheres. Inquiry began in 1808, and was more prolonged and exhaustive than before. But the reports produced were more informed, and the discussions they provoked were less passionate than previously. The Fifth Report of 1812 on the revenue and judicial system of Bengal became a classic of Indian administration. The Act of 1813 showed how much the climate had changed in twenty years in spite of the deadening influence of war conditions. The Company obtained another twenty years lease of life. But the advocates of free trade succeeded in breaking the Company's monopoly of Indian trade, thereby opening a new chapter in Indian economic history. The immediate effect was not apparently very great, but from this change flowed the later commercial and industrial developments which have placed India in the forefront of industrial countries. The apostles of welfare, led again by William Wilberforce, secured the admission of Christian missionaries, a church establishment of a bishop and three archdeacons, and a resolution 'that it is the duty of this country to promote the interest and happiness of the native inhabitants of the British dominions in India and that such measures ought to be adopted

as may tend to the introduction amongst them of useful knowledge and of religious and moral improvement'.[1] Here again the immediate effect was small, but the way was pointed to developments of the utmost importance.

The discussions which led to the Act of 1833 again began in an atmosphere of financial stringency caused by the expenses of the first Burman war. But the success of Bentinck's economies blunted the weapons of the Company's critics and perhaps helped to prolong its life. Before the Act was passed the Whigs had come to power and opened a new era in British politics. The great Reform Bill became law in 1832 and liberal and Benthamite ideas were in the ascendant. The Company disappeared as a commercial agency in India, remaining only as a political agent for the Crown. Their possessions were to be held 'in trust for His Majesty, his heirs and successors, for the service of the Government of India'. Centralization advanced another step. The new ideas of law bore fruit in the conferment of definite legislative powers and the establishment of a Law Commission, of which Macaulay was the most prominent member, to codify in a single system the five existing systems of law.[2] The eventual fruit of this commission was the Indian Penal Code, which came into force in 1860, and the Codes of Civil and Criminal Procedure. Thus the Act formed the starting-point for the development of Indian public law as known today. Similarly, the legislative powers conferred on the Governor-General and his council sitting with a fourth or legislative member (Macaulay was the first of these) formed the starting-point of the legislative development which lead straight to the sovereign parliaments of the Indian union and the Pakistan republic. The final Act (before the Mutiny) of 1853 was passed in the hey-day of Dalhousie's rule and involved only one or two changes. It continued the Company as a government agency. It arranged for the completion of the Law Commission's work.[3] The most important departure was the abolition of the Company's patronage by the introduction of open competition for entry into the covenanted service. Thus the Indian Civil Service, the creation of Cornwallis in its general character, assumed its modern form. The tree of the Company had now clearly lost its sap; its political fruit of the government of India hung overripe from the branches ready to drop into the lap of the Crown as soon as a passing breeze of crisis should shake them.

We can now turn to the broad themes mentioned previously. As the Company was organized as a commercial hierarchy, the early adminis-

[1] The thirteenth and last resolution which was the basis of the Act of 1813.

[2] C. P. Ilbert, *The Government of India*, pp. 83–84. These systems were (1) the body of English statute law as far as applicable, introduced by the charter of George I; (2) all later English Acts expressly extended to any part of India; (3) the regulations of the Governor-General's council, 1793–1834 (for Bengal only); (4) Madras Regulations; (5) Bombay Regulations.

[3] By appointing British commissioners to codify the work of the Indian commissions.

trators were simply merchants seconded to political duties. Many performed both at once and few suffered their commercial interests to atrophy. A decisive step was taken by Cornwallis when he separated the commercial and revenue departments. Thereafter men opted for either the commercial or revenue branch and became either merchants or administrators, but not both. The goal of the merchant was a commercial residency, which lasted until the end of the Company's Indian trade in 1834.[1] These stately merchant princes, possessing the dignity without the rapacity of the old 'Nabobs', were a picturesque by-product of the Company's evolution. The Company as a whole retained its monopoly of both the Indian and China trades until 1813 with some minor encroachments by private traders after 1793. In 1813 it lost the Indian monopoly but retained that of China, whose tea trade had long provided the bulk of its profits.[2] In 1833 it lost the Indian trade altogether and the *monopoly* of the China trade; in 1853 this also ceased, leaving the Company a political husk which hardly concealed the actual control of the Crown.

The state's control of the Company's political affairs steadily increased after 1783. The first factor was the personality of Dundas himself, whose diligence and skill in managing men firmly established the Board of Control as the final arbiter of political decisions. The withdrawal of the Crown's right to consent to the appointment of the Governor-General in 1786 did not in practice affect the steady growth of the board's power and the right was in any case restored in 1813. The superior political experience and greater breadth of view of the presidents gradually overbore the more extensive local knowledge of the directors. Their power of appointment soon came to be that of objecting to men they disliked rather than insisting on men they wanted. The breaking of the commercial monopoly in 1813 and the extinction of the Indian trade in 1833 cut the ground from beneath the directors' feet by depriving them of any independent body of support. When in 1853 six of the twenty-four directors were nominated by the Crown they were further undermined from within and it was clear that the end was near. The Crown was the effective ruler of India in all but name from 1834,[3] the Company being its local managing agency.

The control by the state of the Company's affairs in India itself was initially effected by its control of the Governor-General. The first step was the reduction of the council to three including the commander-in-chief, and the rule that the other two members should be Company's servants. The next was the appointment of a man high in British public life to the supreme office and the power given to him (by the

[1] For an account of the latter-day commercial resident see W. W. Hunter, *Annals of Rural Bengal.*

[2] For the interaction of tea and opium in China see M. Greenberg, *British Trade and the opening of China 1800–42* (1951).

[3] The Act of 1833 came into force in 1834.

Amending Act of 1786) of overriding his colleagues. The Governor-General was thus raised above local controversy and prejudice and elevated above his colleagues both in dignity and legal authority. The relation of Warren Hastings to his councillors was exactly reversed; the former colleagues became in effect subordinates.[1] When the Governor-General was also commander-in-chief, as was the case with Cornwallis, Lord Hastings, and Bentinck (from 1833), his position was indeed formidable. The power of the governor-general was gradually enlarged by increasing his authority over the two subordinate presidencies. In 1793 his superintending powers were underlined and further defined, and he automatically superseded a governor on visiting another presidency. An example of this was Wellesley's sojourn in Madras in 1798–9. In 1834 his paramount authority was emphasized by the change in his title form from Governor-General of Fort William in Bengal to that of Governor-General of India. His power of making 'regulations' for the presidency of Bengal was extended to formal law-making powers by means of legislative Acts for the whole of British India in 1834. A governor-general was virtually impregnable so long as he was supported by the London cabinet and behaved with reasonable prudence. Even Ellenborough would not have been recalled had he not lost the confidence of his former colleagues in Peel's ministry.

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For the Nabobs in Britain see J. M. HOLTZMAN, *The Nabobs in England 1760–65* (1926).

[1] The cases of those Company's servants (Shore and Barlow) who became governor-generals (apart from acting appointments) on the whole served as exceptions to prove the rule. They lacked something of authority and tended to see the situation through local spectacles.

CHAPTER 7

Cornwallis

THE rule of Lord Cornwallis marks an epoch in the history of the British enterprise in India. Not only is there a change of persons and of method, but also a change of outlook and of atmosphere. Internally the commercial colour of the Company's government faded from this time forward, and with it went the grosser forms of corruption which had stained its servants and the accompanying connivance and collusion which had existed in the courts both of directors and proprietors. Sound government in the interests of the inhabitants was henceforth the touchstone of policy rather than an enlargement of the Company's investment or an increase in territorial revenues. That sound government, it is true, was conceived along traditional lines of an administration which collected the taxes and left the people as much as possible to themselves. But if not yet a conscious 'welfare state', the Company's internal government from this time forward can fairly be described as a justice state, whose ideal was defined by an unknown eulogist who thus addressed Shahjahan when in public procession—'Hail, O King, thou owest a thanksgiving to God. The King is just, the ministers are able and the secretaries honest. The country is prosperous and the people contented.'[1] Externally the Cornwallis régime also marked a change. The change proved to be a stopping-place rather than a change of direction but it was nevertheless effective and significant. The haphazard expansionism of the preceding thirty years was replaced by a steady determination of the home authorities, now seconded by the men on the spot, to limit commitments and eschew imperialism. For the next twelve years policy was self-consciously unaggressive. The old directorial urge for revenue which led to the condonation of the seizure of Tanjore, which urged Bombay to take Bassein as well as Salsette whenever practicable, which condemned the Rohilla war because it was waged by Hastings rather than because it was aggressive, was now replaced by the settled policy of the British government itself working both through its Board of Control and the remodelled directorate. The Cornwallis period saw the replacement of financial and commercial by political motives within and of makeshift imperialism by planned isolationism without the Company's dominions.

With the advent of Cornwallis a fresher air began to blow through Government House. His appointment was the result of the long series of discussions and debates which began in 1781 as soon as public

[1] Ibn-i Hasan, *Central Structure of the Mughul Empire*, p. 360

attention ceased to be focused on the American problem. The culminating points were the debates on the two India Bills and practical results were registered in Pitt's India Act of 1784. For our purpose we may say that this Act marked the determination of the British Parliament to assume responsibility for the Company's dominions,[1] and defined the means by which this was to be accomplished. An essential part of the plan was the appointment to the governor-generalship of a British public servant who would be independent of local interests, and vested with adequate authority. The post was twice offered to Cornwallis before he finally accepted it,[2] and for his benefit a special Act was passed permitting him to be governor-general and commander-in-chief at the same time and allowing him when necessary to override a majority in his council. Cornwallis was forty-eight at the time of his arrival in India. He had already a distinguished military career behind him. He was a man of such solid and accepted ability that his reputation survived the surrender of Yorktown in America in 1781. Above all, he possessed a massive integrity before which corruption and small-mindedness withered, and he was the personal friend of Pitt, the Prime Minister, and of Dundas, the President of the Board of Control. He was incorruptible without being sour and clear headed without being brilliant. His rule of bluff common sense and of genial simplicity was neither faultless nor always wise, but it imported a new spirit into British Indian affairs which was never again wholly lost.

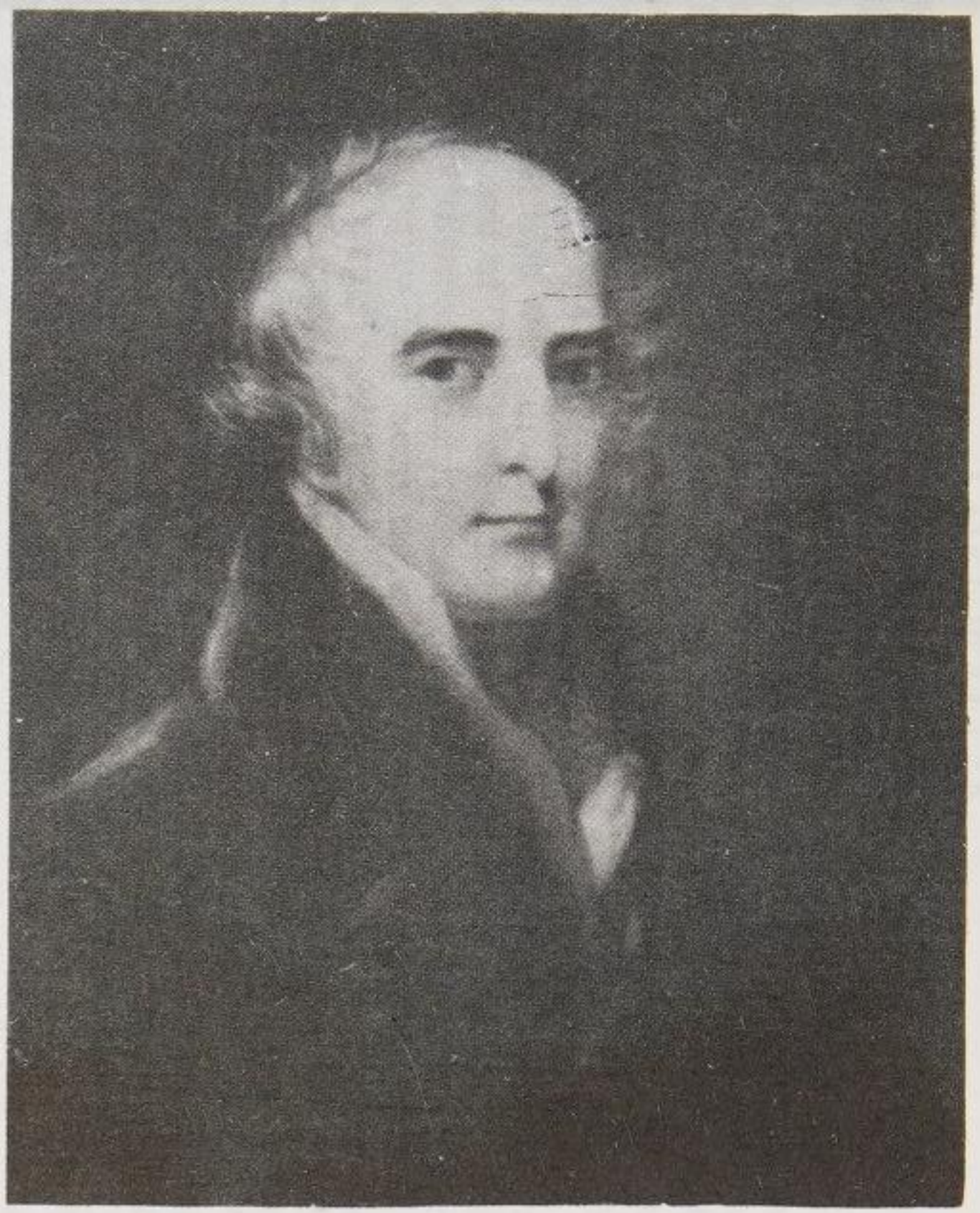
During the eighteen months which passed between Hastings's departure and the arrival of Cornwallis the government was carried on by Sir John Macpherson. He was an official of the old school, and his rule was described by the studiously moderate Cornwallis as a 'system of the dirtiest jobbing'.[3] Cornwallis never spoke a word in criticism of Warren Hastings, but more damaging than the rhetoric of Burke were the measures which he found it necessary to take. In his cleansing and reformatory work he found able assistants from the Company's servants. There was John Shore, his chief lieutenant in revenue matters, and Jonathan Duncan, later Governor of Bombay, who came second in Cornwallis's estimation. There were the cousins Charles and James Grant, the former of whom became Chairman of the Directors and his son a President of the Board of Control, and Charles Stuart the commercial expert. But in the main he had to rely on his own judgement and strength in carrying through measures which necessarily affected long-established vested interests. That he did so much at the cost of so little friction is witness as much to his personality as to the powers with which he had been vested. A less vigorous man would have been

[1] The sovereignty of the Crown over the Company's dominions in India was explicitly declared by the Charter Act of 1813.

[2] The explicit offer to Cornwallis was made after Lord Macartney had made unacceptable conditions for acceptance.

[3] *Correspondence of Charles, first Marquess Cornwallis,* ed. C. Ross, 3 vols., vol. i, p. 371.

a. Cornwallis



b. Wellesley

baffled by obstruction; a more imperious one like Ellenborough would have made confusion worse confounded.

The instructions with which Cornwallis was armed covered three main heads in internal affairs. He was to settle the administration on a regular basis, cutting down extravagance and suppressing corruption; he was to settle the system of revenue collection moderately and permanently; and he was to reform the judiciary, retaining the Indian framework while informing it with the spirit of British justice, and securing even-handed justice between Indian and European.

His first task was purification. Within a few months of his arrival the whole Board of Trade was suspended and most of the members subsequently dismissed for irregularities. A regiment was discovered for which full pay had been drawn for several years, but which only existed on paper.[1] Almost all the thirty-five collectors were, he believed he had good reason for thinking, deeply engaged in the forbidden private trade, 'and by their influence as collectors and judges of Adalat became the most dangerous enemies to the Company's interest'.[2] The Governor-General was pressed by influential men in England, including the Prince of Wales, to sanction 'infamous and unjustifiable jobs'.[3] Hickey records in his journal how offices were bought and sold. Cornwallis had the integrity to reprobate and the strength of mind and weight of dignity to resist such importunities, and they were never so unashamed again. The rule against private trade in the public branch of the service was sternly enforced, offenders being sent home. These cleansing acts would only have had a temporary effect had not Cornwallis gone to the root of the evil by regularizing the emoluments of the Company's servants. In pre-Plassey times the Company had paid nominal salaries and expected their servants to support themselves by private trade which did not interfere with the Company's investment. The first attempt to find a substitute for private trade in the new conditions was Clive's Society of Trade. This was superseded by a somewhat larger scale of salary with commissions at a fixed rate on the revenue. The salaries were too low and the commissions too high,[4] and the possible abuses which this system might encourage are obvious. It must also be remembered that no pensions were paid on retirement; in consequence many servants did not retire when they should, because they were too indebted to afford to do so, while everyone wished to amass capital sufficient to support themselves in dignity and ease in England. The temptation to make haste by illicit means was inevitably strong. Cornwallis was strong enough to induce a reluctant Company to abolish the commissions and to substitute for them generous fixed salaries. These salaries were attached to posts for which minimum

[1] Ibid. [2] H. Beveridge, *Comprehensive History of India*, vol. ii, p. 575.
[3] *Cornwallis Correspondence*, vol. ii, p. 51.
[4] The outstanding case was that of the resident of Benares. His salary was Rs. 1,000 a month (£1,350 a year); his commission £40,000 a year, with, according to Cornwallis, other perquisites as well.

terms of service were prescribed. Thus the old evil of great offices held by junior servants was ended. With this basis he was able to take a strong line on the already forbidden but still extensively practised private trade. Thus were laid the foundations of a civil service generously paid, imbued with a high sense of public duty, and possessed of an impressive integrity, which governed India during the nineteenth century. Its work was done on the whole with notable efficiency and its standard of conduct was one of the highest in its contemporary world.

The reformation of the public service had, however, other facets which proved to be less pleasing. The day of public selection of public servants had not yet dawned. Nomination by the directors therefore continued to be the avenue of entry. The worst jobbery was prevented by the higher standards of service exacted in India with home support. A real misfit was not any longer able to make a fortune and return quickly, and would soon be returned without one. But the limited method of choice tended to produce a caste and family spirit within the service. Its strength may be gauged from the jealousy which greeted the appearance of the 'competition-wallah' after 1853. The hereditary traditions of Indian service produced some splendid examples of family service; it also produced a strongly exclusive and obstinately conservative outlook. It was this spirit which obstructed the admission of Indians to the higher services and which prevented the service as a whole from reading the signs of the new nationalist times in the late nineteenth century. Another unfortunate consequence of Cornwallis's measures was the exclusion of Indians from all higher government posts. Cornwallis had as poor an opinion of Indian probity as of British. 'Every native of Hindustan, I verily believe, is corrupt', he wrote. But while he had the means of improving the standards of European officials, he saw no way in the case of their Indian counterparts. Therefore he refrained from appointing them to responsible posts, or removed them when possible with the shining exception of Ali Ibrahim Khan, the incorruptible judge of Benares. This policy received legislative sanction in the Charter Act of 1793 which limited the tenure of all posts worth more than £500 a year to covenanted servants of the presidency concerned. Since no Indians were members of the covenanted service, they were not eligible for appointment. Subsequent admission to higher offices was the result of special enactments until admission to the covenanted services became a limited reality as well as a theory after 1853. The exclusion of Indians had certain important effects. The large ministerial Indian class, both Hindu and Muslim, found themselves excluded from public life in the Company's dominions. Public ability ceased to bloom when denied the sun of opportunity. Thus grew the legend that public ability did not and never had existed in India, that proficiency in commerce and the law were the summit of modern Indian achievement. Secondly, European and Indian gradually ceased to rub shoulders in public

affairs. Within the Company's territories personal relations, outside the sphere of commerce, tended more and more to be that of master and servant, the governor and the governed. Up-country equality of status continued and with it good fellowship and mutual respect. When status becomes unequal opinion grows unbalanced. So developed that contempt for things and persons Indian which was already prevalent in Calcutta in the time of Lord Hastings, and which produced the shallow half-truths of Mill and Macaulay and the downright contempt of lesser men.

In order to follow the administrative reforms of Cornwallis some idea of the state of affairs as he found it on his arrival is necessary. The administration was divided into the commercial and revenue branches. The commercial branch was responsible for the Company's annual commercial investment. This originally took the form of silk, wool, cotton goods, and indigo. Later saltpetre was added and, from 1770, raw cotton. Until 1756 this was partly paid for by specie sent from England; thereafter it was met by the revenue of Bengal. The investment was controlled by the Board of Trade and was actually made by a number of commercial residents by means of contracts. The revenue or general branch controlled the civil administration, which in practice meant the collection of revenue and the administration of civil justice (criminal justice still being managed by the nawab through his deputy Muhammad Reza Khan). Revenue control was exercised by a Board of Revenue at Calcutta, and the work of collecting land and local customs dues performed by British collectors. The opium trade was a government monopoly let out on contract to Indians while the salt trade had since 1780 been controlled directly from Calcutta, the price being fixed every year by the Supreme Council. European officials had now become familiar figures in the districts, most of which had a collector and a judge, and some a commercial resident besides.

Hitherto service in both branches of the government had been interchangeable. It is easy to see how habits and outlooks legitimately acquired in the commercial field might prejudice good administration in the political. Cornwallis's first care was to separate the two. In 1789 all the Company's servants were allowed to opt for one or other branch and there remained. The Company's commercial system took the form it retained until the abolition of its trade in 1834. A reformed Board of Trade directed operations. The annual investment remained in the hands of the commercial residents, who had no political powers and worked on the agency system. They were remunerated by commissions on the value of the investment (the money annually entrusted to them) and they were allowed private trade. This was a recognition of the fact that in their case it was a practice impossible to stop. But this practice ceased to be a serious evil because they were deprived of political power, not only while holding a particular office, but throughout their careers. To adapt Macaulay's phrase about Impey, they became rich and quiet, leaving it to their political colleagues to become

famous. The public half of the government was now divided into the general (civil and military matters) and the revenue departments, which also included civil justice. We can now consider Cornwallis's successive reformation of the revenue and judicial systems.

As in all mainly agricultural communities, the chief source of the public revenue in India was land. The system of landholding, the methods of assessment, and collection of land revenue were therefore of fundamental importance both to the administration and to the people themselves. In India the systems of land tenure were regulated by age-old custom and it was their methods of assessment which were subject to change and regulation. The people looked for lenient assessments and honest collection, the government for accurate information and reliable collection. The interests of the cultivator and of good government in fact largely coincided, but if government were pressed for money or distracted by internal dissension, long-term maxims of justice would be put aside; superintendence would become lax; the agents of collection would be pressed or allowed to do their own pressing on the cultivators of the soil, with the inevitable results of harsh demands, punitive measures of collection, and rural misery.

The system in vogue when the British were granted the *diwani* of Bengal in 1765 was that known as the *zamindari*. The peasant paid a fixed share of his produce (in cash or kind) to tax-collectors known as *zamindars* (landholders). The share was traditionally one-third of the gross produce, and might be more or less. The *zamindar* paid over nine-tenths of what he received to the state, retaining a tenth as remuneration for his exertions. By custom the *zamindar* had acquired an hereditary right. He paid a fine or fee on his succession, but could only dispose of his holding by state permission. Failure to pay the full *jama* or assessment was visited by fines, imprisonment, or floggings but not by confiscation. In addition to his revenue rights and duties, the *zamindar* regulated the occasional taxes imposed by the provincial government and was responsible for public order in his district. The *zamindars* of Bengal thus formed a provincial aristocracy. They were revenue collectors, magistrates, local magnates, and men of substance. But they were not landowners or a landed aristocracy in the British sense. They were an official aristocracy of hereditary rent-collecting and magisterial magnates. Their estates resembled those of British landlords in appearance, but were essentially different in texture. This system had its own checks and balances. The *zamindar* was too close to the peasant to be deceived about his capacity to pay. If the *zamindar* was too rapacious the peasant could leave his estate for another's or band together against extortion. The *zamindar* had only his own levies to rely upon, and severe repression therefore defeated its own object by ruining the *zamindar*.

At first the British acted through Indian agency and the system went on undisturbed. When Hastings took over the management in 1772 a series of experiments began, which proved the least successful

part of his administration. A quinquennial settlement was tried, farming the revenues to the highest bidder, though the great famine was only two years past. Then annual settlements were tried with resulting unsettlement, loss of confidence, and rural stagnation. Revenue farming became a matter of speculation amongst Calcutta financiers and the ancient personal connexion between tax-collector and cultivator was broken in the anxiety to increase receipts and preoccupation with revenue returns. The whole rural life of the Bengal Presidency was disturbed by the regulation of demand by people ignorant of conditions and by the displacement of the old hereditary agents. Nor did the appearance of British collectors improve matters. They lacked both knowledge of and interest in the countryside; they were bewitched with the dream of fortune-making; they were, taken as a whole, the unfeeling agents of the impersonal calculating machine at Calcutta.

The Parliament which turned its attention to this problem was an assembly of landlords. They felt an affinity with the *zamindars* and they too easily assumed them to be tropical replicas of themselves. It was therefore natural that Pitt's Act of 1784 should insist on the abandonment of annual leases and direct the preparation of 'permanent rules' for revenue collectors. Cornwallis was himself a great landowner of the better type. The solution of the problem was thus in a sense predetermined before the facts were studied. But the facts *were* studied. Hastings himself set on foot the first inquiries and it was under his *aegis* that John Shore and Charles Grant acquired their knowledge. Cornwallis intensified this process, and contributed himself, with his instinct for the land, a far more understanding spirit than that of his great predecessor. In 1789, as a result of Shore's researches, a settlement for ten years was made. In 1793, at the end of his term, Cornwallis urged Dundas to sanction the permanence of the settlement. Shore opposed this step, but the famous ten-days' study of Pitt and Dundas at Wimbledon decided against him. On 22 March 1793 the Permanent Settlement was decreed. The *zamindars* were regarded as landowners; they were to pay, as previously, nine-tenths of the revenue collection to government through the collectors and the lesser holders, or *taluqdars*, direct through the sub-collectors. The cultivators or ryots were to be protected from oppression by the British collectors.

This settlement has been variously praised and blamed; it is for us to assess its results on the life of the three provinces. The first result was a further period of unsettlement caused by the fact that the new assessment was too high for the existing state of cultivation. Many old-established *zamindars* could not meet their obligations. Instead of being imprisoned or flogged they were more humanely but ruthlessly sold up, and their places taken by moneyed men from Calcutta. Thus the character of the *zamindar* body suffered a large change; the body which emerged into permanence about 1800 was a very different set of families to those who had existed in 1765. The personal tie between *zamindar* and peasant was in many cases broken, and the absentee

landlord became common. The subsequent result was the re-establishment of stability in the Bengal countryside. The class of *zamindars* was largely a new one, but it was a stable class. It was bound by strong ties of interest to the ruling power. The settlement was made when there was still a large margin of cultivable land lying waste. Security led to this land being taken up, with an increase of population and of cultivation. The increased rents went to swell the coffers of the new *zamindars'* families, since the government assessment was fixed. The nineteenth-century *zamindar* thus reaped the whole agricultural increment of Bengal and became wealthy as well as secure. Some, like the Tagores and the Laws, used their wealth for the public good and the promotion of the arts. Others preferred the Irish model of absentee landlordism. As the *zamindars* gained in status, the peasants sank, for they were now legally regarded as rent-paying tenants and as such subject to eviction. Their customary occupational rights were forgotten and they shared little in the new prosperity. Not till 1859 did the Bengal Land Act do something to protect their interests. As the personal link with the *zamindar* was broken by the break up of the old families, so the functional link was impaired by the withdrawal of the *zamindar's* police and revenue powers. Henceforth the *zamindar* was a revenue collector only and the peasant a rent-payer only. The Permanent Settlement restored rural order in Bengal and provided the conditions of agricultural development, but it replaced the organic ties between the two classes of rural society by an impersonal cash-nexus. The two classes were henceforth unrelated and hostile. Order and progress were secured but social justice was not done. If annual settlements were too flexible, a permanent settlement was too rigid; between the two it took forty years to find the mean of a long-term settlement for thirty years.

The Permanent Settlement was set into the frame of Cornwallis's reorganization of the district and judicial administration of Bengal. Cornwallis found the foundations of the district administration laid by the reforms of 1786, which set up thirty-five districts headed by British collectors and supervised by a Board of Revenue, and he proceeded to build thereon. The Board of Revenue was reorganized; the thirty-five districts were reduced to twenty-three; each collector was provided with two European assistants. The collector's former stipend of Rs. 1,200 a month, which in fact he supplemented by private trade,[1] was raised to a subsistence salary of Rs. 1,500. In addition he was given a commission 'in the nature of reward' of 1 per cent. on the revenue collected. In the case of the largest district, Burdwan, this was reckoned at Rs. 27,500 a year. At the same time he was strictly forbidden to engage in private trade of any kind and this rule was vigorously enforced. The commission system might have led to abuse if the collectors had continued to be responsible for making annual assessments as

[1] Private trade by collectors and other specified officers had been forbidden along with the reception of presents by the Regulating Act of 1773. See Sir C. Ilbert, *The Government of India*, 3rd ed., p. 49.

well as collecting revenue, but as soon as the demand was fixed the collectors' expectations were regularized, and the last great bar to integrity was removed. Thus the framework of the typical British district administration was laid.

The collector was given magisterial powers, and at first presided over the old civil and new revenue courts as well. But this apotheosis did not last. By a system of trial and error Cornwallis reformed the whole system of civil and criminal justice. For civil justice district or *zillah* courts were instituted which dealt with both civil and revenue matters. Above them were four provincial courts at Calcutta, Murshidabad, Dacca, and Patna, with a final appeal in important cases to the Supreme Council sitting as the *Sadr Diwani Adalat*. At the same time the system of criminal justice was brought into line. Hitherto this had been in the hands of the nawab, whose deputy, Muhammad Reza Khan, presided over the *Sadr Nizamat Adalat* at Murshidabad and whose local agents or *darogas* held local courts in the districts. Cornwallis solved the problem of dual authority by causing the dismissal of Muhammad Reza Khan and himself assuming the criminal judicial functions of the deputy nawab. The court was brought from Murshidabad to Calcutta, where the Governor-General and council sat with Indian advisers. In the districts the *darogas* were superseded by four courts of circuit stationed at the four provincial capitals. Over each two civil servants presided assisted by Indian advisers, and they made circuits through their divisions twice a year. Under these arrangements the collector was limited to his magisterial and collecting duties. The civil courts were administered by district judges and the criminal courts by the judges of the courts of circuit. Thus a beginning was made in separating the Company's judicial from its revenue service, as its revenue service had already been separated from the commercial. The Bengal district pattern with its twin luminaries of collector and judge emerged, which was to remain substantially unchanged through the British period. The separation between the judicial and administrative classes was complete; though it was later modified in other areas and even in Bengal itself, it always remained substantial.

The system was completed by two further measures. The rule of law was expressed in unmistakable terms.

> The collectors of revenue and their officers, and indeed all the officers of Government, shall be amenable to the courts for acts done in their official capacities, and Government itself, in cases in which it may be a party with its subjects in matters of property shall submit its rights to be tried in these courts under the existing laws and regulations.[1]

This rule, which was never departed from, laid the foundation of the civil liberty of the subject which was the essential basis for the later addition of the political liberty of self-government. At this point, more than at any other, did new British diverge from old Mughul India, and the seeds of the future were planted amid the still flourishing crop of

[1] *Cornwallis Correspondence*, vol. ii, p. 558.

past practice. The second measure was the establishment of police. First in Calcutta and then in the districts police were established for the maintenance of order. As a consequence the *zamindars* were relieved of their police duties. Salutary for the towns, it was less obviously beneficial in the districts where it separated the *zamindars* still farther from the people and tended to make government more distant and more olympian. Law remained largely unaltered, the civil code being customary and the criminal continuing to be the Islamic code shorn of those penalties such as mutilation, which offended the more humane instincts of the age. Finally the whole system as it stood was embodied in May 1793 in a single set of regulations, known as the Cornwallis Code.

The constructive work of Cornwallis was one of which any man might have been proud. Though the Permanent Settlement had serious defects, it gave tranquillity to the countryside and stability to the government; though the reorganization of the services was marred by the exclusion of senior Indians, it established a service distinguished for both efficiency and integrity; though the courts were blocked before long by massive arrears of business, they were capable of improvement and embodied the great principles of the separation of powers and the rule of law. Taking it all in all, Cornwallis had set the Company's ship of state on a new course, and had brought in justice and integrity to redress corruption and power politics.

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CHAPTER 8

The South, 1780–1801

THE south has always been in some degree isolated from the north; it pursues its individual way and maintains its distinctive character even in the days of the telegraph, the railway, and the aircraft. It has always had a power situation of its own, albeit ultimately subordinate to that of the north, and its peculiar features have always required, even if they have not always received, separate and considered treatment. It is therefore desirable to see the south through its own spectacles during the formative years of the British dominion.

At the time of the break-up of the Tughluq empire in the fourteenth century the south established its own power system. It was based upon a balance between the Hindu empire of Vijayanagar to the south of the river Kistna and the Muslim Bahmanī kingdom, and later its successors, to the north. This lasted for two centuries until the collapse of Vijayanagar on the field of Talikota in 1565. Thereafter the two Muslim kingdoms of Bijapur and Golkonda divided most of the Deccan between them, leaving a fringe of Hindu chiefs in the extreme south and along the Malabar and Konkan coasts. The Hindu chiefs were saved by Mughul encroachments from the north and Maratha emergence to the west, and in the late seventeenth century the whole system was overthrown by one of the periodic assertions of northern authority. Aurangzeb's conquest of the Deccan kingdoms was more thorough than ʿAlā-ud-dīn's, but it was hardly more lasting. From the beginning Mughul power in the Deccan was drained by the running sore of Maratha activity in the Western Ghats, and it was soon to be paralysed by wars of succession, by Maratha advances northwards, and by foreign incursions from the north-west. From 1720 the Mughul garrisons were in effect left to their own devices, and there emerged a revised version of the balance of power of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This time it was a triple instead of a twin balance, the new and disturbing element being the Maratha power to the west. The Muslim power in the Deccan redeployed itself under the first Nizam and last Mughul governor to form the virtually independent state of Hyderabad, the Peshwas of Poona grew formidable in the west and the Hindu power in the south emerged once more as the state of Mysore. Hyderabad, including the whole coastline from Orissa to Tanjore, was the largest and the Peshwa's the most powerful state. The development of the new geopolitical pattern in the south was interrupted by the Anglo-French struggle in the mid-century which left at its close a fourth power controlling the western seaboard and the Carnatic plain.

At the same time the Hindu state of Mysore was transmuted into a Muslim power by the adventurer Haidar Ali, being made formidable by his talents. The wars of the next twenty years served to emphasize the power of the four by securing the eclipse of lesser states. The Nawab of the Carnatic sank to be an ingenious but helpless debtor in the hands of the Company; Tanjore was equally dependent. The ancient Malabar rulers including the Zamorin of Calicut, whose ancestors had warred with the Portuguese, were absorbed by Mysore and only Travancore maintained a precarious independence.

At the close of the second Mysore war in 1784 the leading power in the south, apart from the Company, was Mysore itself. It owed this position partly to the genius of its late ruler Haidar Ali, and partly to its central position on the Deccan plateau which enabled its rulers to move on interior lines to threaten the Company in Madras, the Nizam in Hyderabad, and the Peshwa in Poona by turns. The Marathas would indeed have been stronger if they had been united. But since the thirties much of their energy had been diverted by the glittering prospect of northern empire. The Marathas might have had northern empire or southern dominion but their strength was insufficient for both. Further, they were no longer a united people, but rapidly splitting into five states nearly as jealous of each other as they were aggressive towards others. The fame of Mysore was maintained by Haidar's son Tipu, who inherited most of the talents of his father without his judicious and cautious temper. Restless and erratic but brilliant in tactics and fertile in expedients, he kept the south in continual alarm and was regarded, until the day of his death, as the most formidable power with which the Company had to deal. Against his personal defects, his intolerance, and his maltreatment of prisoners must be set his incessant activity, his military genius which frequently baffled British generalship by the speed of his movements and the rapidity of his changes of front, and his skill as an administrator which kept his territories loyal under the severest tests and was acknowledged by their British invaders. His name dominates the writings of the time; his destruction gave to Wellesley a resounding prestige which carried him through six more years of wars and of mounting expense and criticism.

Cornwallis came to India forbidden, under Pitt's India Act, to declare war on country powers or conclude treaties for that purpose without the consent of London. No man was more anxious than Cornwallis to obey these injunctions, but he could not evade the commitments which his predecessors had entered into. In the south he found himself the victim of the divided control of pre-Regulating Act days, when Madras was a law unto itself and often a singularly injudicious one. In 1765 the district of Guntur in the northern Sarkars had been assigned to Basalat Jung, a brother of the Nizam, as a *jagir* or fief for his life. Its resumption by the Madras government in 1779 was one of several factors which prompted the Nizam to join Haidar Ali and the Marathas in a triple attack on Madras in that year. Hastings

secured the Nizam's neutrality by handing back Guntur. Basalat Jung died in 1782, but the Nizam evaded the surrender of the district. It was Cornwallis's demand, under the treaty of 1765, for the return of Guntur, which led to war with Tipu Sultan. The Nizam complied but made a counter-demand under the treaty of Masulipatam of 1768, for troops for the reduction of the district of Balaghat. This district was now in the possession of Mysore, and had been recognized as such by a treaty made by the same Madras government only a year after its treaty of Masulipatam with the Nizam. Further, Mysore's possession of Balaghat had been confirmed by the treaty of Mangalore which ended the war with Tipu (the second Mysore war) in 1784. Madras had double-crossed itself and made it impossible for Calcutta to behave with honour to all parties. In this dilemma, which sorely vexed him, Cornwallis chose the friendship of the party he judged least dangerous to the Company. He recognized the treaty of 1768 with the Nizam as binding as being prior to those of 1769 and 1784. In a letter he promised to hand over Balaghat should it ever come into the possession of the Company; he undertook to supply troops to the Nizam provided that they were not used against any power in alliance with the Company; and he supplied a list of such powers from which the name of Tipu Sultan was excluded. Cornwallis comforted himself with the reflection that war with Tipu was bound to come and that his action was only hastening the inevitable. War with Tipu may indeed have been inevitable, and not merely on account of Tipu's bad faith. His restless and ambitious temper was bound to see in the Company the principal threat to his power, and his previous experience of the Madras government could have fostered in him no great opinion of European good faith. Further, he lacked his father's insight into the depth of the Company's reserves of power or the restraint to bide his time until a more convenient season. But the action of Cornwallis lowered the diplomacy of the Company to the level of the contemporary country powers; its boasted integrity was no better than the duplicity of the Nizam or the shifts of the Marathas. The misfortune was not that the Company fell below the diplomatic standard of the day but that it did not rise any higher. It sank below the level which it claimed to maintain and which, from the time of Warren Hastings, it had in some measure achieved. If Cornwallis had declined to lend troops to the Nizam in time of peace, or had retained the name of Tipu in the list of the Company's friends, his action might not have been wholly consistent and might not have prevented eventual war, but it would have been an honourable attempt at compromise between conflicting obligations. As it was, Tipu, in the manner of the time, regarded the omission of his name as a signal that an attack was being prepared and took care to strike the first blow.

Tipu precipitated the war by an attack on Travancore, which was in alliance with the Company, at the end of 1789. Cornwallis countered by forming a league with the willing but ineffective Nizam and the

ever-ready Marathas. At first Tipu's agility in manœuvre and skill in cutting off supplies was too great for the slow-moving and heavily cumbered Madras army under General Medows. At the end of 1790 Cornwallis himself took command. He took Bangalore, but though he defeated Tipu in the field and arrived within sight of Seringapatam, his agile adversary was able to compel a second retreat by cutting off supplies. A third advance brought final success and Cornwallis was able to dictate peace terms under the walls of Seringapatam in March 1792. One-half of Tipu's territories were annexed, and indemity of over £3 million (330 *lakhs*) was exacted, all prisoners were released, and two of Tipu's sons were handed over as hostages. Wisdom after the event suggested that it would have been better to have annexed the whole state whereby another war would have been prevented, or, as an alternative, to have restored the ancient Hindu dynasty. But the political horizon did not present the same perspective to the observer of 1793 as to the historian of 1956, or even the statesman of 1800. Tipu had run even Cornwallis close. Cornwallis was in an exposed situation, with sickness in his camp, treachery suspected among his allies, and the hot weather upon him. A single check on the walls of Seringapatam would have made his position critical. The man of Yorktown had no mind to add a Saratoga to his record. Half-annexation was accepted as a prudent measure of safeguard, but full annexation would have disturbed the Indian allies and aroused public opinion at home. Pitt's India Act still forbade the acquisition of fresh territories. Further, the territory was too large to be administered with any prospect of efficiency. Madras had not impressed with its handling of the Carnatic and full annexation might well have left the last state of Mysore worse than the first. The alternative of restoring the Hindu dynasty was proposed by Medows. But there could be no certainty that a discredited family, even with the aid of the minister Purnea, could maintain itself in so large an area against Marathas and the Nizam without, and the discontented elements which would remain within. Cornwallis adopted what seemed to be the sensible compromise of drawing the dragon's teeth while leaving him his lair.

The effect of the annexation was virtually to surround Mysore with British territory, except on the north-west and north-east, where the Marathas and the Nizam made gains. The taking of Malabar and Coorg cut Tipu off from the western sea, the retention of Baramahal deprived him of the passes through which his father had descended to devastate the Carnatic. Tipu was confined and shut in, and for all his will for revenge might have remained quiet if events in Europe had not raised false hopes in his restless mind.

Peace continued for five years during the administration of Sir John Shore. Cornwallis's last act in the south was to propose a mutual guarantee between Peshwa and Nizam against attack from Tipu. When the Marathas demurred the Nizam turned to Cornwallis for security. Cornwallis would give no more than general assurances of

support, which were esteemed even less in India than in the Europe of that time, or since. When Shore explicitly declined any definite commitment, the Nizam turned to his able French officer, Raymond, to strengthen his army. The Nizam was not deceived as to the intentions of the Marathas. The Maratha confederacy had long since developed from a co-operative enterprise to a permanent family quarrel. In 1795, by a sudden twist in the bewildering maze of Maratha politics, the five units united for the purpose of plundering the Nizam. Although the Nizam was as much an ally as Travancore had been when succoured by Cornwallis in 1789, Shore refused all help. Such were the shifts to which a faithful observance of the non-interference policy drove honest men. As a result the Nizam was heavily defeated at Kharda in March 1795. A state of virtual vassalage was only avoided by a renewal of Maratha disputes which caused the Poona minister Nana Fadnavis to buy the Nizam's support in a disputed succession to the Peshwaship at the price of most of the fruits of Kharda.

The curtain was rung down on the struggle for power in the south by Lord Mornington, soon to become the Marquis Wellesley. Apart from the weakness of the Nizam, the restlessness of the Marathas, and the implacability of Tipu, a new factor in the situation had appeared in the form of the French Revolution. Since 1793 Britain had been at war with France and since 1797 alone in the struggle. France was known to have designs on the East; as Wellesley set sail for India Bonaparte was preparing his expedition to Egypt. To forestall France in all quarters was even more important than to counteract the Afghans in the north-west. When, therefore, Wellesley learned that Tipu in his anxious search for allies had sent agents to the French island of Mauritius, that the governor there had rashly proclaimed a French alliance with Mysore, that Tipu had planted a tree of liberty at Seringapatam, and that a handful of French troops had landed on the Malabar coast, he thought that instant and drastic action was called for. He removed to Madras and made characteristically thorough preparations while seeking to isolate his foe. The Nizam was the first object of his attention. Knowing himself to be weaker than Tipu and the Marathas as well as the Company Nizam Ali proved willing to conclude the first of Wellesley's subsidiary treaties. In September 1798, after delicate negotiations skilfully conducted by Malcolm and Kilpatrick, the Nizam agreed to dismiss all his French officers, to receive in their stead four batallions of Company's troops, and to increase the subsidy for their support from ½ to 2 *lakhs* of rupees a month. He gained security but he lost control of foreign relations. The Peshwa was next approached. Too wily to fall into the trap of a subsidiary treaty and too suspicious to co-operate fully with the British, he remained aloof but neutral. When preparations were complete Tipu was called upon for an explanation of the Governor of Mauritius's proceedings and his reply was duly interpreted as a signal for war. A double attack was launched from Madras and Bombay;

within two months Seringapatam was besieged. After Tipu had refused a demand for the cession of half his territory and the payment of £2 million as an indemnity, the city was stormed on 6 May 1799 and Tipu killed, fighting bravely in the breach. Though as determined upon war as any twentieth-century dictator Wellesley was surprised at the completeness of his success. His real object was the removal of the French menace to India which he exaggerated but in which he sincerely believed, and the establishment of British hegemony in the south. He was prepared for some annexation, but now found himself with the whole of Tipu's still extensive dominions at his disposal. His dilemma was that of Cornwallis, for where were the British administrators for such an area to come from? In addition the Nizam was entitled to half the territory annexed and this would unduly aggrandize him. The solution was to restore the Hindu royal family still living in seclusion in Mysore, whose heir was a child five years of age. An area rather larger than the old dominions of Mysore was allotted to the child raja, with Tipu's Brahman minister Purnia as the *de facto* ruler. The arrangement was sealed by a subsidiary treaty on the new model, which, in addition to the usual provisions, enabled the Governor-General to interfere in the internal administration of the country and even to take over its direct management in the interests of good government. This was to prove important later. The Company annexed Kanara in the west, thus completely encircling Mysore with British territory, Coimbatore in the south, and Seringapatam with other land in the east. The Nizam received land adjacent to his state, but soon surrendered it in settlement for the support of his subsidiary force. Under Purnia the new Mysore state enjoyed a continuity of administration until 1811, while the districts transferred to the British were soon to receive the attention of the humane and industrious Munro.

British supremacy in the south was now established and it only remained to tidy up, as it were, the loose ends. The Carnatic was still under the nominal control of its nawab, with the proviso that the British could assume the administration in time of war. The plausible and pliable but none the less tenacious Walajah had died in 1795, to be succeeded by his less able son, Umdut-ul-Umara. It was irksome to Wellesley to give up anything, let alone the most fertile province of the south; on Umdut's death in 1801 he revealed correspondence with Tipu which he considered had placed him and his father 'in the condition of public enemies of the British Government in India'. He selected Azam-ud-daula, a grandson of Muhammad Ali, as titular nawab and took over the actual administration.[1] At almost the same time a disputed succession in the Maratha principality of Tanjore[2]

[1] In 1853 Dalhousie abolished the title of Nawab of the Carnatic. The head of the family has since been designated the Prince of Arcot and accepted as the premier noble of the Madras Presidency.

[2] The Tanjore dynasty was a survival of the Maratha wars of Aurangzeb's time. The raja descended from Sivājī's father, Shāhjī. The pension lapsed in 1855 on the failure of heirs.

enabled Wellesley to take over that administration in return for a pension of 4 *lakhs* of rupees (£40,000) a year. The British dominion south of the Kistna was now complete.

It remains to note something of the internal history of the Madras Presidency during the previous twenty years. The presidency never fully recovered during this period from the results of the Anglo-French wars. The Company's servants were demoralized, first on the model of Bengal, by the corrupting influence of the princes whose fortunes depended upon European aid, secondly by the opportunities for quick returns provided by wars with its relaxing of supervision and stimulation of spending, and thirdly by the presence of the greatest single centre of corruption in the Nawab of the Carnatic. The Anglo-French wars had left Muhammad Ali with formal independence and the title of Nawab Walajah,[1] but they had been waged in his name largely with Company's funds, with the result that he was deep in debt. During the sixties the Company's debt had been reduced but a fresh one was contracted with the servants of the Company themselves. Then came the Mysore and Maratha wars, with the result that the nawab plunged deeper still into debt while his embarrassments were aggravated by persistent maladministration. Official pressure to reform the administration and private demands for arrears of interest steadily mounted, but the nawab soon detected the possibilities of playing off creditors and Company against each other, well knowing that in many cases they were the same persons. It was the official interest of the Company to reform the Carnatic administration and this pointed to the taking over of the state and the funding of the public and private debts on reasonable terms. But this was against the interest of the private creditors, who would lose their exorbitant rates of interest, and against the private interests of many officials themselves who were also private creditors. It was to the interest of these men to keep the question of the nawab's debts simmering, as it were, but never to allow it to come to the boil when drastic action would be necessary; or to change the metaphor, to top the nettle from time to time by such measures as the reduction of interest, rather than to grasp it firmly at the root.[2] The nawab showed much address and persistence in using private interest to influence public causes and thus exercised an influence in the Company's affairs which was as unhealthy as it was tenacious. The leader of the private creditors was the Company's merchant Paul Benfield, who, if not necessarily the most unscrupulous, was certainly the most successful and notorious. He and his friends did not neglect to maintain an interest both with the Company and in public life in England. Benfield himself was a member of Parliament for many years and the Indian interest was a force to be reckoned with in England as well as in India. The nawab was the sworn enemy of the Raja of

[1] By the treaty of Allahabad, 1765.

[2] The internal interest on the private debt was reduced by stages from 36 per cent. to 10 per cent., but as fast as one set of debts were regularized, a fresh crop appeared.

Tanjore and his influence reached its height in 1776 when Lord Pigot on attempting the restitution of Tanjore to its Hindu raja was deposed and imprisoned by a group of Benfield's friends.

The affairs of Madras reached their nadir in 1780 when Haidar Ali's irruption into the Carnatic found the Madras government entirely unprepared and quite unable to deal with the crisis. With the arrival of Lord Macartney as governor in that year there began a steady improvement. Macartney was able and upright but he was handicapped by the dispatch from Bengal, before his arrival, of an agent to watch over the implementing of a treaty negotiated between Hastings and Muhammad Ali in Calcutta. Macartney went to Madras as a supporter of Hastings, but the fluctuations of the Company's London politics lead to misunderstandings which bred distrust between the two. Macartney rejected the Calcutta treaty but imposed one on the same lines upon the nawab in 1781. The nawab assigned the revenue to Macartney in person for five years. But the actual transmission of the revenue was successfully obstructed by the nawab's agents. Macartney then himself assumed the power of appointing renters, and introduced considerable reforms. His work was first threatened by a change in Hastings's attitude and then undone in 1785 by orders from home cancelling the assignment of the nawab's revenues to the Company. These changes were not unconnected with the activities of Benfield's friends in London. Macartney resigned and went home to argue his case but the Madras interest was for the moment too strong.

But such a state of affairs was too unsatisfactory to last for long even in Madras. In 1787 a fresh treaty was concluded with the nawab, by which he was to pay four-sevenths of his revenue to the creditors, and to place the sole military power with the Company. During Tipu's war Cornwallis went a step further. In 1790 he took over the Carnatic and found control so conducive to the conduct of the war that by a fresh treaty in 1792 it was arranged that the Company should take over the whole administration in time of war. Still scope was left for the nawab's ingenuity and the creditors' activities. It was left to Wellesley, helped by the welcome occasion of the last Mysore war, to retain the administration which he had taken over, to select a new nawab who agreed to accept a pensionary status, and to arrange for the liquidation of the debt. Only then was the official air cleared from the taint of corruption and the ground cleared for serious civil administration.

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CHAPTER 9

Shore and Wellesley

LORD CORNWALLIS had been appointed governor-general because it was considered that only a personality from British public life high above local jealousies and ambitions could control the Company's servants in Bengal. He himself hoped that such public men would always be found, but when the time came no 'very proper man of distinction', in George III's words, could be found to undertake the task. Dundas, the President of the Board of Control, for a time thought of going out himself, but in the end the choice fell upon Sir John Shore. Shore had been collaborator of Cornwallis in his work of reform and reorganization, and the esteem in which he was held was such that Cornwallis thought that an exception might be made in his favour. Shore justified every estimate of his ability and integrity, but like a too faithful chief-of-staff, felt embarrassed when entrusted with supreme authority. His handling of affairs showed a caution which verged on irresolution and a faithfulness to non-intervention which verged upon disregard for obligations.

Shore succeeded in 1793 during the high noon of the non-intervention, non-aggressive policy laid down by Pitt's India Act in 1784. At the time the Act was passed it was believed that many Indian wars had been the result of the ambition and cupidity of the Company's own servants. Therefore any declaration of war or annexation had been forbidden without the consent of Parliament. This firm directive was supported by other considerations. It was believed that the Indian powers were not in themselves aggressive and if left to themselves they would, as it were, sort themselves out and thereafter strike a balance with the British power in India. Mysore, the Nizam, and Madras would divide the south; the Marathas would settle their own disputes and then be balanced by Afghans and Sikhs in the north and by Bengal to the east. Thus tranquillity of a sort would be restored to India and trade would proceed. There was the further consideration that all danger from France or other European powers had now been removed. A trading company had no business to rule for the sake of ruling provided that it could make its profits without it. Parliament from concern for the Indian people and the directors from concern for their profits were determined to curb the high-spirited instincts of the men on the spot.

This system worked well enough under Cornwallis for the reason that the assumptions upon which it was based held good. Danger from France remained in abeyance and in the first years of the revolution

seemed likely to be suspended for many years. The Maratha disputes continued and seemed likely to result in the supremacy of their ablest and most judicious leader, Mahadji Sindia. The Sikhs were growing in power in the distracted Panjab, with the Afghans in uncertain but not threatening strength beyond. Only in the south did Cornwallis find himself involved in war and there the exception could be explained on the ground of Tipu's well-known restlessness and of the clumsiness of Cornwallis's attempt to reconcile two mutually contradictory obligations.

It is now easy to see that the continued success of non-intervention depended upon the continued validity of these assumptions. The French must continue to be remote and the Maratha disputes evolve into an hegemony which would be constructive and non-aggressive. But when Shore assumed office in 1793 the facts of politics had already begun to upset the logic of politicians. It was Shore's misfortune to strive to maintain a policy whose bases were being steadily shorn away by unexpected political events. It was his weakness not to perceive the new forces which were developing and to adapt the accepted policy to meet them. The changes were broadly two. In Europe during these years a distracted France apparently in dissolution was becoming a dynamic revolutionary France with a leader of genius about to show his interest in the East by an expedition to Egypt. In India the expected Maratha evolution was cut short by the death of Mahadji Sindia in the prime of life in 1794. Thereafter fresh dissensions destroyed all prospects of stability in central India and gave rise to renewed aggression in order to divert attention from internal stress. The hope of Indian tranquillity was seen to be vain and non-intervention a blindness to the facts.

On Sindia's death Nana Fadnavis regained his influence in Poona and thought to cement it by an attack on the Nizam. The Nizam had already sought a defined guarantee of security from Cornwallis and later from Shore, but though these had been refused he was listed as a friend of the Company and was as much an ally as the Raja of Travancore had been when Cornwallis came to his rescue against Tipu in 1790. He had, moreover, earned this friendship by the cession of Guntur and by his help in the war against Tipu. In spite of this Shore held aloof and thus gave colour to the belief that his real motive was fear of the Marathas. Indian confidence in British good faith was shaken, and the unease was increased by the Nizam's resounding defeat at Kharda in 1795. Had the Marathas remained united the position would indeed have been serious, but they immediately dissolved into contending factions and the Nizam himself shortly recovered much of his lost ground as the price of support for Nana at Poona. A result was the Nizam's further dependence on the French officers who trained his body of disciplined troops.

In Oudh Shore was more successful. The state was already under the Company's protection with troops stationed within its borders. He

could therefore afford to be vigorous without fear of parliamentary censure. In 1797 the Nawab Asaf-ud-daula died and a reputed son, Wazir Ali, was recognized as his successor. On realizing that Wazir Ali was both illegitimate and incapable, Shore intervened to replace him by a brother of Asaf, the capable but unfortunate Saadat Ali. A new treaty was enacted, which included the cession of the fort of Allahabad, the complete control of foreign relations, and the raising of the annual subsidy to 76 *lakhs* of rupees in return for a guarantee of all the nawab's dominions. The presence of the Afghans under Zaman Shah at Lahore, of whom the Company had been unduly sensitive since the days of Ahmad Shah Durrānī, possibly contributed to this stiffness. It was a presage of Wellesley's own later policy.

Shore's Indian career was ended by one of the periodic combinations of the Bengal officers at the end of 1795. They had been angered by Cornwallis's reductions of inflated allowances and now took action against his gentler and less influential successor. The news of his concessions determined the directors upon his recall. Cornwallis was persuaded to return but withdrew on learning that Dundas in his turn had made concessions he deemed inadmissible. Thereupon Lord Mornington was appointed Governor-General.

The new governor-general at the time of his appointment was thirty-seven years of age. He was small of stature but keen of face, imperious in temper, talented, energetic, and of boundless ambition. A classical scholar in his youth, he had been a M.P. for several years and one of the East India commissioners since 1795. He had the rare political insight which detects changes in political balance at the times of their occurrence but lacked the final political virtue of nicely balancing means with ends, of knowing the limit to which one's resources will stretch. His insight encouraged him to attempt and his ability accomplished a series of dazzling triumphs, but his lack of self-limitation in dealing with both foes and colleagues led first to a series of checks and then to recall. With an imaginative sweep greater than his illustrious brother Arthur, he fell short in the quality of judicious poise. He was well fitted to impress the authority of the home government upon the Company's servants, 'repelling all approaches to familiarity with a degree of vigour amounting to severity', but quite unwilling to be controlled in his turn by his directorial and ministerial colleagues.

The changes brought about during the seven years of Wellesley's leadership were so great that they are rightly considered to mark an epoch in the development of the British power in India. But Mornington's appointment marked no conscious revolution in the policy of the British in India. There was rather a change of political climate and a change of emphasis; both suited the ardent and enterprising temper of the new ruler, who was able to effect a revolution before the realization of what he was doing resulted in his recall. A change of political climate had occurred both in India and Europe. It was becoming clear

that the Indian powers would not of themselves develop a pattern of power politics which would produce a balanced international system. A concert of Indian powers would never match the eighteenth-century concert of Europe. Commerce demanded tranquillity for its conduct and the maintenance of permanent armaments eat into profits. Those who had looked to balance began therefore to consider supremacy as the political aim of the British in India; and even within the Company itself there were those who defended a forward policy on the ground that it would be more economical in the long run.[1] Even more marked was the change of climate with regard to Europe. The days were past when the French Revolution was believed to have heralded the beginning of a new era, and when Pitt had clung to peace till the last possible moment. Revolutionary France was now believed to menace liberty in England and the established order everywhere. The first coalition had come to an inglorious end with the treaty of Campo Formio in October 1797, and young General Bonaparte was known to be preparing a large expedition for an unknown destination. The British governing class were nervous with apprehension and tense with resolution. After the Italian campaign of 1796 no move by the French was incredible and every measure to forestall them welcome. Wellesley's first measures evoked a warm response from all who were disillusioned by the continuance of Indian anarchy and alarmed by the phenomenal growth of French power. And these included both Pitt and Dundas.[2]

It was in this favourable atmosphere that Wellesley was able to pursue his own policy without apparent disharmony with the home authorities. His personal policy was simple; all traces of French influence must be swept from India in order to allow no foothold to an invading army, and since Indian anarchy encouraged such footholds, on this and on general grounds non-intervention and balance must be replaced by British supremacy in India. At first his ideas of the practicable went no farther than 'forward against the French'; it was the dazzling success of his first move which encouraged him to proceed towards the larger aim.

Wellesley's (for by this name we shall henceforth know him)[3] two main instruments of policy were war and diplomacy leading to the subsidiary treaty. In practice the subsidiary treaty was often but the prelude to war, but this was a reversal of intended procedure which he never failed to accept. These were supplemented by *diktats* by which feeble princes were bowed off the *masnad* into well-pensioned retirements. Wellesley himself never had any doubts as to the legality or morality of his proceedings because he was convinced that in the large view British supremacy was in the interests of the people of India as a

[1] e.g. David Scott of the directorate.

[2] On 18 June 1798 the secret committee informed Wellesley that Bonaparte's armament had left Toulon on 19 May. On 18 Oct. Wellesley heard of the invasion of Egypt and on 31 Oct. of Nelson's victory of the Nile.

[3] Mornington was created Marquess Wellesley on the defeat of Tipu.

whole. With a curious blindness to its democratic implications, he sacrificed princes for the good of the people. On each issue as it arose he was comforted by a generous talent for convincing himself that his opponents were wholly in the wrong. The most striking of these instruments was the subsidiary treaty. As with most of Wellesley's measures it was not in itself wholly novel. The originality lay in the use he made of it. Clive concluded the first subsidiary treaty with Shuja-ud-daula of Oudh in 1765, and Hastings and Cornwallis had developed it. But whereas these men concluded their treaties for a limited purpose with a particular prince, Wellesley regarded them as part of the technique of supremacy. The treaties with Oudh were defensive, treating Oudh as an outwork of Bengal against the Marathas and Afghans; the treaties of Wellesley were offensive, placing advanced posts of British troops in the heart of purely Indian territory. They were the prelude to British control of non-Company India and they provided vantage-points for winning the wars which they provoked.

The nature of the subsidiary treaty was simple and it proved as effective as it was simple. A prince in danger from his neighbours was encouraged to turn to the British for help. The British guaranteed his independence against all comers, and to make the guarantee effective, stationed a detachment of Company's troops within the state, which was pledged to march against any invader. The prince undertook to pay and supply these troops either in cash or by alienating a portion of his territory to British control. In the primary purpose of giving a prince security these treaties proved completely successful, but they also had secondary effects. The prince was secure against his Indian enemies but also irrevocably attached to his British friends. The princely fly was firmly enmeshed in the British political web, and any hope of escape was idle. The people for their part were spared recurrent invasions and the harrowing scenes which accompanied armies on the march at this period, but they had no resource against the vagaries of the ruler himself. The efficiency of these treaties in undermining the independence of their beneficiaries was such that one is prompted to ask why any ruler was ever induced to agree to them. The answer is that some (like the Peshwa Baji Rao) were too short-sighted or distressed to consider ultimate consequences when concluding them, while others (like the Nizam) preferred certain dependence with a treaty to certain extinction without one. Opportunism was universal at this time, and while most princes realized the strength of the British at the moment, few had much conception of the secret springs of power which would make that strength still greater. The most distressed still hoped that some turn in events might yet restore their fortunes.

We can now turn to the actual conduct of affairs by Wellesley. Wellesley arrived in May 1798 and within a few weeks heard of the proceedings of Tipu's agents on the Isle de France (Mauritius). With a mind brimming with anti-Jacobinism and fearful of Bonaparte's designs his first impulse was to levy instant war. But the proverbial

unreadiness of the Madras government proved a much more effective hindrance than their customary counsels of caution. Wellesley then proceeded to prepare armies in Madras and Bombay with characteristic thoroughness, himself moving to Madras at the end of the year. The delay thus incurred was turned to good account by the diplomatic isolation of Tipu. In September 1798, as already described, the first of Wellesley's subsidiary treaties was concluded with the Nizam. Attempts also made to secure the Peshwa secured his neutrality if not his signature. The success of the war which followed surpassed Wellesley's expectations and left him with the whole of Mysore at his disposal. In this predicament he showed good sense in restoring half of Tipu's state to the heir of the dispossessed Hindu Rajas of Mysore. This first success, complete and resounding as it was, echoed through India and Britain alike. At a stroke the prestige of the Company in India was restored and elevated to a fresh peak; in Britain this success, following Nelson's victory of the Nile, provided a much-needed tonic. It was in a way even more effective than Nelson's fleet, for the British were accustomed to victory at sea but had become sadly unused to it by land. The extravagant language used both about Wellesley and his achievement revealed not only the over-estimation in which Tipu had been held, but the depression of spirits into which the British had fallen.

The prestige thus gained by Wellesley sustained him against all criticism until his armies were checked by Holkar. He was now master of the south with the Nizam in his train and had no Indian power of substance to deal with except the distracted Maratha confederacy. There followed a series of *diktats* whose manner even the most convinced admirers have found difficult to justify. There was first the Carnatic itself. Amongst the papers captured at Seringapatam was correspondence with both Muhammad Ali and Umdut-ul-Umara. Wellesley was convinced that the Carnatic should be under British control and it did not require a very detailed scrutiny to convince him that he had now been given just cause for seizure. On the death of Umdut-ul-Umara in 1801 his eldest son was set aside in favour of a grandson of Muhammad Ali who was recognized as nawab on condition that he resigned the administration to the Company. One-fifth of the net revenue was set aside for his support and the whole of his debts taken over by the Company. This liquidation of the double government was both overdue and salutary, making sound administration possible for the first time, but it would have been better if Wellesley had based his actions on the people's needs rather than on their princes' pretended crimes. Shortly before, a disputed succession in Tanjore provided a pretext for taking over this state from the descendant of Sivājī's brother. The justification of misgovernment here was lacking but that of insignificance was greater. In the same year, 1799, on the death of the Nawab of Surat, the successor of the Mughul governors of the chief Mughul port, he pensioned the new nawab and assumed the

government. Surat's value as a fort and as a strategic point between the Deccan and Gujarat was here the justification.

Wellesley now turned his attention to Oudh. Since 1765 this most prosperous of Mughul provinces had been regarded as a buffer state between Bengal on the one hand and the Marathas and Afghans on the other. Hastings had stationed one brigade in Oudh and Cornwallis had increased it to two. But the more efficiently Oudh was protected the less able it became to take care of itself. Under the listless though cultured sway of Asaf-ud-daula,[1] the army fell into disarray and the finances into confusion, while the state became the happy hunting ground of European concession hunters and adventurers. At the end of the century a series of events again focused attention on Oudh. While the Maratha menace had receded owing to the struggle for supremacy in the Deccan, the Afghan menace was revived by the two visits of Zaman Shah to the Panjab in 1796 and 1798. He never proceeded farther than Lahore and his force was moderate; but it consisted almost wholly of cavalry, and there was no organized force to meet it between the Sutlej and the Ganges. The fact of mobility and the memory of Ahmad Shah gave Zaman Shah a disproportionate importance in the eyes of contemporary politicians and Wellesley was not slow to take advantage of the fact. At this time Asaf had died and the ephemeral Wazir Ali had been replaced by the careful and cautious Saadat Ali at the price of a fresh treaty dictated by Sir John Shore. But the Afghan provided a pretext for interference which the murder of the resident Cherry by Wazir Ali and his short-lived revolt strengthened. Saadat Ali was unable to deal with his rival and showed hesitation and nervousness. Wellesley demanded disbandment of his troops and an increase in the subsidiary force. An offer by the nawab to abdicate 'could not, in his Lordship's opinion be too much encouraged'. When the offer was withdrawn on the knowledge that the succession would go not to the nawab's son but to the Company, this action was made an excuse for further demands. Eventually, on the new plan (first tried out on the Nizam in 1800) of exacting territory in lieu of payment for a subsidiary force, the nawab was deprived of the broad and fertile belt of land between the Ganges and the Jumna and in Rohilkhand which amounted to one-half of his territory. The state of Oudh remained compact, prosperous, and disorderly, but it was now, except along the northern Himalayan border, entirely surrounded by British territory. It became a domestic problem of the Company and ceased to be a factor in Indian high politics. The nawab, with the encouragement of Lord Hastings, proclaimed himself king in 1819 to the dismay of most Muslim opinion which regarded the act as one of disloyalty to the emperor at Delhi. Thenceforward the rhythm of disorder, remonstrance, and promised reform continued until the final annexation of

[1] Asaf was a great builder, his major achievement being the great *Imambara* of Lucknow.

1856. The ceded districts were settled by the governor-general's brother Henry, later Lord Cowley.

So far Wellesley had been carried along on the momentum of the destruction of Tipu with its assumed ensurance against French attack. The doubts of the directors were stifled by the support of the ministry and the acclaim of the public. He now approached the decisive phase of his grand design. So long as the Marathas were outside his system there could be no British supremacy in India; so long as British desired or Marathas feared such supremacy, there could neither be peace on the principle of balance, nor armed neutrality on the principle of mutual fear. At first events seemed once again to play into Wellesley's hands. The Maratha coalition which defeated the Nizam at Kharda dissolved at the moment of victory. The suicide of the young Peshwa Madhu Rao Narayan in October 1795 opened the way to fresh dissensions. In the confusion which followed the ablest politician was Nana Fadnavis. But he had no troops of his own and died in 1800. The new Peshwa Baji Rao II, the son of the ill-fated Ragunath Rao or Rhagoba, possessed all his father's irresolution with none of his charm and few of his talents. Incapable of firm leadership or of inspiring devotion he stumbled from shift to shift and was a congenial subject for Wellesley's technique. The two strongest Maratha leaders were Sindia and Holkar. Daulat Rao Sindia had inherited his uncle's French-trained and led army under Perron, but lacked his ability and was almost as irresolute as Baji Rao himself. In the house of Holkar the successor to the politic Tukoji and the saintly Ahalya Bai was the brilliant but erratic Jaswant Rao, a man cast in the mould of an Italian *condottiere*. He could lead and he could dare and until his reason gave way he moved across the north Indian scene like a blazing and erratic comet. But he had no disciplined army behind him and the day of the light-armed, lean-limbed horsemen who had baffled Aurangzeb were gone. There was no time for these contending forces to sort themselves out before a collision took place with the waiting British power.

After the death of Nana in 1800 'with whom', said the resident, 'departed all the wisdom and moderation of the Maratha government', Maratha politics resolved themselves into a struggle between Sindia and Holkar for the control of the Peshwa Baji Rao. That hapless and vicious prince joined Sindia against Jaswant. The murder of Jaswant's brother made compromise impossible. In October 1802 he defeated Sindia and Baji Rao at Poona and raised to the Peshwaship Amrit Rao, brother by adoption to Baji Rao. Baji Rao was now in dire straits. He fled to Bassein and there accepted in desperation a subsidiary treaty at Wellesley's hands. He accepted a subsidiary force of six battalions, resigned his claims on Surat, accepted British arrangements with the Gaekwar, and promised to abstain from war or relations with foreign powers without British knowledge and consent. He was forthwith restored by Arthur Wellesley to Poona.

The treaty of Bassein was Wellesley's master stroke. It gave the

British the supremacy of the Deccan as Seringapatam had given them south India. If it did not yet convert the British empire in India to the empire *of* India, it brought the issue close to decision, for the remaining Maratha powers had lost the key position of their system, the control of the Maratha homeland. By implication it made war with these powers inevitable since they could not accept the new situation without accepting the ultimate supremacy of the Company. The shock of being face to face with the British power produced a momentary movement to unity. But the Peshwa's hands were tied. The Gaekwar was neutral and Holkar, unready and jealous, retired to Malwa. This left Sindia and the Raja of Berar who had joined forces and crossed the Narbada. This gave Wellesley his chance to demand their withdrawal and on their refusal to declare war in August 1803. The campaign was planned in two parts; in the Deccan to defeat and separate the combined forces and in Hindustan to break up Sindia's disciplined troops under General Perron at Aligarh. Arthur Wellesley's victories of Assaye and Argaon broke the power of the Bhonsla raja and Lake's capture of Delhi and defeat of Perron's army at Delhi and Laswari subdued Sindia.

The treaties of Deogaon with the Bhonsla and of Surji Arjungaon with Sindia ended the war before the end of the year and marked the summit of Wellesley's success. Both states received residents at their courts, recognized the treaty of Bassein, and banished Europeans other than the British from their service. The Company gained Cuttack from the Bhonsla, thus joining in a continuous belt of territory Bengal with Madras. From Sindia the gains were even greater. The Doab or river plain between the Jumna and the Ganges, which had supported Perron's army, together with Delhi and Agra, passed to the British, and the Doab became the 'conquered province' of the Bengal Presidency. The Emperor Shah Alam was taken under protection, though Wellesley was careful to make no formal treaty or recognize imperial claims. All Sindia's lands in the Deccan and Gujarat were annexed and his control in Rajputana loosened. The map of modern India was taking shape.

But Wellesley's position was not so strong as it looked. Holkar was unsubdued, and the two subsidiary treaties did not include subsidiary forces; above all vast distances faced small forces set to control numbers of embittered but not yet hopeless men. Wellesley had buried his fangs in the Maratha prey and could not now withdraw them. The attempt to negotiate with Holkar soon broke down and war broke out in April 1804. Monson's defeat near Kotah and retreat to Agra, the siege of Delhi, and above all Lake's failure to storm Bharatpur broke the spell of Wellesley's magic. The Maratha chiefs began to stir again. His enemies in the Company at last obtained the consent of the ministry for his recall. The race for empire was halted in the last lap.

Thus ended in gloom and frustration the most brilliant period in Anglo-Indian annals to that time. Wellesley had shown what a man of

vigour, decision, and clear purpose could affect in a world of dissensions, doubts, and fears. He had divined the weakness of the Indian powers and had applied an effective remedy with great skill as well as great resolution. Throughout, his acts showed vigour and clear-sightedness; in the case of the Marathas he displayed virtuosity in planning and co-ordination as well as great skill in threading his way through the tortuous maze of Indian diplomacy. He had the defects of his virtues, an impatience with all that stood in his way, of public rights as well as of public vices, a vigour which ran to high-handedness, a pride which verged on insolence, a tendency to underrate genuine difficulties, a subordination of means to ends. He must be judged in terms of power rather than of rights or public morality. He believed that India was ripe for unification and that this great end made irrelevant all minor wrongs. In fact, he was so nearly right that he may almost be excused his error. But it may be questioned whether the attempt to hustle history really benefited the people of India. His final campaign broke down authority in central India without putting anything in its place; to that extent he must share with others more usually blamed the responsibility for the Pindari scourge.

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FOR Shore, apart from the general histories, see Lord TEIGNMOUTH, *Correspondence of John, Lord Teignmouth* (2 vols., 1843), and H. FURBER (ed.), *The Private Record of an Indian Governor-Generalship* (1933). In these letters to Dundas Shore, while nervous and anxious to please, shows himself to be not incapable of firmness.

For Wellesley Mill is a stern but well-documented critic and Marshman an enthusiastic admirer, calling him the Akbar of the Company's dynasty. There is an admirable modern study by P. E. ROBERTS, *India under Wellesley* (1929). The standard life by R. W. PEARCE, *Memoirs and Correspondence of . . . Richard, Marquess Wellesley* (3 vols., 1846), is only partly concerned with India. But W. H. HUTTON, *Marquess Wellesley* (Rulers of India, 1897) is a good short study. The basic authority is MONTGOMERY MARTIN (ed.), *Despatches, Minutes and Correspondence* (5 vols., 1836). Shorter versions are the *Wellesley Papers* (Anon.) (2 vols., 1914), and S. J. OWEN (ed.), *Selections from Despatches*, &c. (2 vols.), 1877. The first volume contains a survey of Wellesley's administration. The same editor's *Selections of the Despatches of the Duke of Wellington* (1880) may also be used.

For the Marathas see GRANT DUFF or KINCAID and PARASNIS. For home politics see P. E. ROBERTS, op. cit., and C. H. PHILIPS, *East India Company 1784–1834* (1940).

RECENT PUBLICATION

IRIS BUTLER's *The Eldest Brother* (1973) is a fascinating re-appraisal of Lord Wellesley, in both his public and private lives, based on new material.

CHAPTER 10

Interlude: Barlow and Minto

In assessing the reasons for change in Indian policy regard must always be had to conditions in Europe and Britain as well as in India. The directors were subject to commercial and parliamentary opinion as well as mindful of profits abroad; the ministers of the day were sensitive to public opinion and the changes in the international scene. Many factors contributed to the recall of Wellesley and they operated as much in Britain as in India. A section of the directors had supported, or at least acquiesced, in the early stages of the forward policy because they believed that supremacy was the surest way to peace and revival of trade. But their tolerance turned to opposition as expenses grew, nearly doubling the Company's debt in seven years.[1] They were affronted by Wellesley's failure to keep them informed and outraged by his unconcealed contempt. The majority objected to his advocacy of private trade. But it was the ministry not the Company which took the decisive step. Pitt and Dundas at first sustained Wellesley because they believed that the French threat to India was real. Ministers grew lukewarm when wars continued after that threat had been clearly removed. When the French war was renewed in 1804 and England was threatened with invasion Pitt and Dundas (back in office) grew fearful that Wellesley was attempting a task beyond his own strength and beyond British capacity to maintain. The checks of Kotah and Bharatpur confirmed this fear, which explains the promptness of the recall which followed. Britain could not afford an indefinite Indian war in the year of Trafalgar and Austerlitz.

The eight years of marking time which followed should not be regarded as a mere return to the non-intervention principles of Pitt's India Act. It was now generally agreed that there could be no stable Indian balance of power and no decorous concert of Indian powers. Supremacy in some form was the only solution, but the time was not ripe. Napoleon was a more pressing danger than Marathas or Pindaris. The Indian problem was 'put on ice' until the French problem should have been solved. The ardent followers of Wellesley on the spot saw only the devastation of uncontrolled India, and their impatience was both marked and natural. This tension underlay much of the literature and controversy of the period. It was a conflict between what was desirable to British minds in India and what was possible in view of British commitments in Europe. It was an interlude in rather than a

[1] From £17 to 31 million between 1799 and 1806.

reversal of the forward policy. The fort must be held until the final sortie could be made.

Wellesley's successor was Cornwallis, now in his sixty-seventh year.[1] His aim was to replace the Company's dominions within the limits of the practicable, but by no means to restore the *status quo*. This meant in practice withdrawal from entanglements with Sindia and Holkar but no disturbance of the position at Hyderabad, Lucknow, or Poona. The measures he proposed erred in one direction as Wellesley had erred in another, but he died at Ghazipur on 5 October while on his way to enforce his views. His successor was Sir George Barlow, a Company's servant and the right-hand man of Wellesley, who showed, like Shore before and Lawrence after him, the permanent official's tendency to caution when vested with supreme responsibility. To him fell the task of drawing in, as it were, the Company's horns, and this work he performed faithfully. In November 1805 Sindia's treaty was revised. Gwalior and Gohad were restored to him and his northern boundary fixed at the river Chambal. He was given a free hand throughout the non-British Deccan and in Rajputana. Holkar, who had been pursued to the Panjab by Lake, was similarly confined to the south of the Chambal but he also had a free hand beyond these bounds. The British retained the Jumna *doab* with Agra and Delhi and its territory where the British stood in a vague but undefined relationship to the Mughul emperor and professed to rule in his name. Elsewhere Barlow maintained the *status quo*, suppressing a nascent intrigue of the Nizam with the Marathas and resisting an attempt by the directors to annul the treaty of Bassein. The south was ruffled by the mutiny of Indian troops at Vellore, fostered by changes in regulations which were thought to reflect upon religion and encouraged by the vicinity of the exiled Mysore princes. It was not comparable to the later Mutiny because the discontent was wholly military, but it cost Lord William Bentinck his governorship of Madras. This was perhaps its most significant result, because that influential nobleman[2] never rested from demanding reparation until he attained the governor-generalship in 1827.

On the whole Barlow did his work efficiently and well. It was no light thing to rein in troops in full career and to control a bevy of politicals flushed with annexations. The value of his work was to reduce the Company's commitments at a time when they could not be indefinitely extended or even maintained at their existing limits, and to do it without provoking a counter-attack from the still independent powers or encouraging those under the Company's control to make a fresh bid for independence. The weak side was the abandonment of commitments to many Rajput states and in particular Jaipur, which in consequence suffered much from renewed Maratha depredations in

[1] He was the oldest governor-general to take office and shared with Curzon a second appointment.

[2] Lord W. Bentinck was a younger son of the 3rd Duke of Portland, Prime Minister from 1807 to 1809.

the next few years. But if it is accepted that, because of the European situation the strength to protect them was not available, it is difficult to see what else could have been done. The Rajput states were so far gone in decay that they could only have proved a liability which at that time the Company could not afford to meet. But Barlow suffered from the pens of those who served him grudgingly and who themselves, as in the case of Charles Metcalfe, came to much the same conservative views when they attained to age and responsibility.

Barlow was recalled on the morrow of his confirmation as Governor-General as the result of a ministerial reshuffle in London. His successor was Lord Minto, who had been one of the managers of Warren Hastings's impeachment and so could be supposed to eschew aggressive designs. He went with genuine reluctance as a believer in marking time but he was too intelligent not to realize quickly that non-intervention could now at best be but watching and waiting. His period of office coincided with the height of the Napoleonic struggle; events in Europe forbade any diversion of strength for a forward move in India; events in India forbade any backward one. His first and principal care was the revived French menace. His arrival in India coincided with the final collapse of the Third Coalition with the defeat of Russia and the treaty of Tilsit. Together Russia and France controlled all Europe and threatened Asia. Napoleon had never given up the dream of Eastern conquest. He toyed with the project of a Franco-Russian expedition through Persia until diverted to Spain and Austria. In addition France still held the Île de France and the Île de Bourbon in the southern Indian Ocean, and controlled the Dutch East Indies through her supremacy in Holland. Minto set out to cement the cracks in the Company's north-western front and then to attack the remaining centres of French power. With much patience and skill and greater discretion than Wellesley he sought to achieve the first of these ends by a series of embassies. Sir John Malcolm was sent on two embassies to Persia to counteract French influence. There he clashed with a royal embassy under Sir Harford Jones. The upshot of much undignified wrangling was a Crown treaty pledging the Shah to resist the French which Minto was feign to accept with what grace he could muster.[1] Mountstuart Elphinstone went to the Afghan Shah Shuja at Peshawar but the treaty concluded proved abortive because the Shah was shortly overthrown. The third and most successful of these embassies was that of the young Charles Metcalfe to the Sikh ruler Ranjit Singh of Lahore.[2] Ranjit had recently established his rule west of the Sutlej and was casting his eyes on the Sikh states to the east, of which Patiala was the chief. The temporary decline of the French menace enabled Minto to take a stronger line than he had originally intended; by the treaty of Amritsar in April 1809 Ranjit Singh obtained a free hand west of the Sutlej in return for undertaking not to interfere to

[1] From these journeys Malcolm obtained the materials for his *History of Persia*.
[2] For an account of the rise of the Sikh power see Book II, Chapter 4.

the east. This was the most important event of the period. This treaty lasted until the first Sikh war in 1845, bringing stability to the whole Panjab; Sikh energies were directed westwards and southwards against Afghans and Sindhis instead of east against the Company; the Delhi territory was secured and Charles Metcalfe's reputation made.

This diplomacy was skilful, and in the case of the Sikhs far-reaching in importance. But the danger it was designed to meet was averted by European events which took Napoleon first to Spain, then to Vienna, and finally to Moscow. The recession of the danger enabled Minto to deal with the remaining strongholds of French power in the East. The Dutch colony of the Cape of Good Hope had been finally taken in 1806. When the French seized Portugal the British occupied Goa, and in 1809 Macao in China. In 1810 strong expeditions were sent to the southern French isles, whence the ill-fated proclamation of the Mysore alliance had emanated and which were now nests of skilful French privateers. Both were captured, Bourbon to be returned in 1815 and renamed Réunion, and the Île de France to be retained under its early Dutch name of Mauritius. Minto then turned his attention to the Dutch possessions in the East Indies. In 1810 Amboyna and the Moluccas were seized; in 1811 an expedition under Sir Samuel Auchmuty, with which Minto himself sailed, wrested Java from the French-controlled Dutch after severe fighting. Minto left Stamford Raffles in charge of the government and thus opened a chapter which was brief though lively in the case of Java itself, but led on to the great adventure of Singapore and so to a new phase of British expansion in the East. The seed of the British empire in south-east Asia was carried on Minto's Java-bound transports.

In India itself the Marathas showed no sign of recovery and indeed sank deeper in distress. The desire of every prince to regain or to retain independence was balanced by their financial plight which now threatened bankruptcy. The only other Hindu states were the Rajputs, who were quite incapable of combination, and Ranjit Singh's new Sikh kingdom in Lahore, which had renounced its interest in affairs east and south of the Sutlej. In order to supplement the meagre collections in their own territories, the Maratha chiefs turned their arms against one another and against the Rajput chiefs; the result was increased misery and greater financial stringency. The natural leader of the Marathas was the Peshwa, but while he never ceased to intrigue industriously, the confidence he inspired was so slight and the distaste for his harsh treatment of his own people so great that there was no general move in his favour. Raghuji Bhonsla lay inert at Nagpur, and the Gaekwar had admitted a subsidiary force in 1805. Daulat Rao Sindia was in financial straits and lacked the energy or ability to take the heroic measures needed to restore his fortunes. There remained the brilliant if wayward Jaswant Rao Holkar who alone had the ability to revive the Maratha cause. But he was struck down by insanity in 1808 and died three years later leaving his state in greater disorder than the rest.

Jaswant's incapacity removed the last restraint on the Pindaris; they now emerged as a positive factor in Indian power-politics as well as an ingredient in the mounting misery of central India. According to Malcolm, they were known as early as the latter part of Aurangzeb's reign as auxiliaries to the Marathas. They started their career as adventurers who attached themselves to Maratha chiefs, themselves pursuing predatory warfare against the Mughul power. They were more elusive, less coherent, and even more ruthless than the Marathas themselves. They were the jackals to the Maratha leopards. They differed from the Marathas in having no bonds of caste or creed, no homeland, and no national pride. They came from all communities and latterly were matched by bands of Pathan freebooters. Their only tie was the leader, their only object plunder, and their means of increase recruits from the population which they had themselves plundered and disrupted. They fed on social and political disintegration; they arose, in Malcolm's words, 'like masses of putrefaction in animal matter, out of the corruption of weak and expiring states'. When the Maratha chiefs were strong, they were the jackals of the chase, limited in numbers and kept in some sort of subordination; when the great chiefs were weak their leaders like Chithu, Wasil Khan, and Karim Khan turned their estates into states, recruited their numbers from landless men and disbanded soldiers who roamed the country, and became an independent force in politics. They can be compared to the 'Free Companies' who scourged Italy in the later Middle Ages.

The Pindaris were neither encumbered by tents nor baggage; each horseman carried a few cakes of bread for his horse. The party which usually consisted of two or three thousand good horse with a proportion of mounted followers, advanced at the rapid rate of forty or fifty miles a day, neither turning to the right nor left till they arrived at their place of destination. They then divided, and made a sweep of all the cattle and property they could find; committing at the same time the most horrid atrocities, and destroying what they could not carry away. They trusted to the secrecy and suddenness of the irruption for avoiding those who guarded the frontiers of the countries they invaded; and before a force could be brought against them, they were on their return. Their chief strength lay in their being intangible. If pursued, they made marches of extraordinary length (sometimes upwards of sixty miles) by roads almost impracticable for regular troops. If overtaken, they dispersed, and reassembled at an appointed rendezvous; if followed to the country from which they issued, they broke into small parties. Their wealth, their booty and their families, were scattered over a wide region, in which they found protection amid the mountains, and in the fastnesses belonging to themselves and to those with whom they were either openly or secretly connected; but nowhere did they present any point of attack; and the defeat of a party, the destruction of one of their cantonments, or the temporary occupation of some of their strongholds, produced no effect, beyond the ruin of an individual freebooter, whose place was instantly supplied by another, generally of more desperate fortune, and therefore more eager for enterprise.[1]

[1] Sir J. Malcolm, *Memoirs of Central India*, vol. i, pp. 430–1.

A word should be added of the parallel bands of Pathans, whose most noted leader was Amir Khan. They were an equal terror to the countryside, but, unlike the Pindaris, they had regular infantry, organized horse and artillery. Nominally in the service of Holkar, they formed a peripatetic military state. They were more formidable in battle, but being more encumbered were less swift in their movements. They were the special scourge of Rajputana as the Pindaris were of the Deccan.

Thus the shadows lengthened over independent India, and the way was prepared for the passive acceptance of the hated foreign rule, because every form of Indian alternative had become insupportable. Minto's six years of watching and waiting made it clear that while the situation might still be watched it would not wait much longer.

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CHAPTER 11

Hastings and Hegemony

EVENTS now moved swiftly to the final act of the drama. India was about to be united under the British because every alternative had been tried and found wanting. The process was quicker than in the case of the Mughuls because the British had greater resources than they and because the local powers were weaker. It involved more dislocation, though it was quicker in evolution, because there was a more complete breakdown of authority in India and there was a greater gulf between the habits and ideas of British and Indians than there was between Mughuls and Indians. So far as the process had gone it appeared to observers, and certainly to Indian observers, to be but a new exercise in power politics, the seizure of the Indian *raj* by one more alien people who in their turn would have their day of glory, their decline and fall. The eight years which had just passed had served, in Indian eyes, as a filling up of the cup of misery until it was ready to overflow.

It was at this juncture that Lord Moira, who will for convenience be designated by his later title of Lord Hastings from the start,[1] appeared in India. Lord Minto had never sat secure in the governor-general's seat because he lacked that essential of strength, the firm support of one party in the state.[2] Cornwallis had been strong in the support of Pitt and Dundas, and Wellesley could safely defy the directors as long as the ministry supported him; Shore and Barlow had been weak because only the directors supported them cordially and not even they consistently. Minto was a Whig appointed to office as a part of a political bargain during the short-lived Ministry of All the Talents. Neither Tory ministry, Whig opposition, nor the Company were strongly in his favour. He kept his place by avoiding too great a divergence from the non-intervention policy, by his successful moves against the French, and by his skill in the conduct of Indian diplomacy. He was not the client of any group; he satisfied and displeased each in turn but not to the extent of recall. Minto's conduct in office represented among other things a very skilful feat of political balance, which should be remembered when considering the tendency to minimize his merits. But by 1812 his term was run. The intrigues which surrounded the formation of the Liverpool ministry on the assassination of Spencer Perceval found the Prince Regent seeking a lucrative

[1] He was the 2nd Earl of Moira, and was created Marquess of Hastings in 1817 for his success in the Nepal war.

[2] C. H. Philips, *The East India Company, 1784–1834*, p. 177.

place for his elderly friend Lord Hastings and the directors anxious to remove Sir George Barlow from Madras. Some sort of bargain was struck;[1] Minto was recalled to an earldom and died on his way to rejoin his wife in Scotland.

Lord Hastings was in his fifty-ninth year. He was a soldier who had risen to the rank of general, but his chief claims to fame had been his friendship with the Prince Regent and his reputation for prodigal expenditure. He had opposed Lord Wellesley's policy and he now found himself called upon by circumstances to complete it. Something in the Indian air seemed to suit this fashionable *bon viveur*. The not very successful soldier showed himself to be a strategist of outstanding talent (he was his own commander-in-chief), the ex-courtier became a statesman of large and generous views; the one-time gambler proved a careful steward of the Company's affairs and the man of fashion revealed a real concern for the welfare of the people.

On his arrival Hastings complained that his predecessor had left him with seven quarrels on his hands, 'each likely to demand the decision of arms'. The most serious of these was the Pindari menace, with its intricate connexion with the still independent and distracted Maratha states. But the solution of the problem was postponed by the emergence of a new and more urgent one, that of the Gurkhas of Nepal. It was perhaps well that this was so, for the delay gave Hastings time to survey the situation and to prepare a comprehensive plan which embraced in one wide sweep the whole problem of Indian disorder. He thus settled at one stroke a question which might have required several uncoordinated campaigns. The only part played by the hills during the eighteenth century had been to provide a refuge for the Sikhs after they had been crushed by the Mughuls in 1715. Through most of their length ancient little kingdoms continued in self-sufficing simplicity and with fluctuating fortunes. The only visitors were pilgrims to the Hindu shrines and the chief article of commerce was ice for the courts. The eastern portion of these hills, stretching 700 miles from Sikkim to the Sutlej, and running back about 100 miles from the plains to the great snowy range, now marched with the Company's lands except for the surviving portion of Oudh. The original Mongolian inhabitants had been conquered by a Hindu race in the fourteenth century and had to some extent intermarried. In 1768 the Gurkha tribe had secured the valley of Khatmandu and from this central position had steadily encroached both east and west. Kumaon, Garwhal, and the Simla hills had fallen to them in the first years of the nineteenth century, but at the Sutlej their farther advances were blocked by the new Sikh power. The Gurkhas then turned their attention to the plains and at once clashed with the British. The Company now had to pay for Wellesley's Oudh annexations, for it was in the ceded Gorakhpur and Basti Districts that the main aggressions took place. The Gurkhas were ejected

[1] Ibid., pp. 177–8.

from the posts they had occupied, but a fresh attack in Butwal in 1814 determined Hastings on a regular campaign.

A four-pronged attack was organized along the extended frontier; 34,000 men were employed against 12,000 Gurkhas. In addition negotiations were opened with the dispossessed hill-rajas to the west. The result was sensational; at the end of 1814 three of the forces were thrown back with heavy loss and only Sir David Ochterloney in the west made any progress. All India held its breath, watching intently; and envoys hurried to and fro between the Maratha courts. With remarkable coolness Hastings reinforced his mountain troops while relaxing no precaution in the plains. Though the British were again checked in the centre and east Ochterloney took Jaitak and Gardner Almora in April 1815, thus liberating the whole region from the Sutlej to the Kali river. The Gurkhas then opened negotiations which dragged on all through the summer rains when operations were impossible. A treaty was concluded but not ratified, and operations reopened at the beginning of 1816. This time Ochterloney, now in supreme command, penetrated the deadly *Terai* and marched directly on Khatmandu. A month's operations convinced the Gurkhas that they could not hope to withstand the Company's troops when properly handled. In March they accepted the treaty of Sargauli which they had formerly repudiated and which Hastings was glad to confirm without further penalty. The clouds were gathering to the south and he was anxious to free his hands. By this treaty the Gurkhas accepted a British resident at Khatmandu; they surrendered most of their claims to the *Terai* or forest belt along the southern border. They also surrendered their recent gains between the Gogra and the Sutlej, where they had appeared as the unwelcome conquerors of ancient principalities, whose harshness was still a living memory in recent times. Thus Kumaon, Garwhal, and the Simla hill states passed to the British and the way was prepared for that unique feature of British India, the hill station. Kennedy, the agent for the Simla hill states, set up his headquarters at Sabathu, and from there discovered the beauties and fresh breezes of the Simla ridge.[1] Charles Metcalfe sang the praises of Kasauli in 1827 and Bentinck's residence in Simla on medical advice during the summers of his great northern tour fairly set development in motion. When Auckland followed his example the career of 'the Hills' as providing sanatoria for invalids, places of recreation for the weary and the idle, and summer seats for governments, was assured. India was won in the sweltering plains of Bengal and the Carnatic; it was administered for nearly a century with the help of the air of the pine-scented breezes of the Himalayas.

This clash was enough to convince the Gurkha people of the strength of the British power. It also left both sides with a lively appreciation of each other's qualities. Their mutual respect was the foundation for the

[1] Lieut. Ross built a thatched wooden cottage in 1819 and Kennedy the first permanent house in 1822.

friendly relations which persisted throughout the British period. The Gurkhas were now confined to their own homeland. For many years they were absorbed in internal dissensions which led to the rise of the Rajput Rana family and their seizure of the premiership of the state in 1846. From that time the king remained a cipher until his re-emergence into the political limelight in 1949. Their land remained closed to Europeans with few exceptions; trade contacts with India were severely restricted and there was little internal development until the twentieth century. But the Gurkha found an outlet for their enterprise in service with the British. The Gurkha contingent became a regular feature of the British Indian army and distinguished itself in every campaign from the Mutiny onwards. Their military lustre never shone more brightly than during the Burma campaign against the Japanese. The tactical skill of Ochterloney, the planning and judicious moderation of Lord Hastings reaped a rich harvest in the permanent security of the Himalayan frontier and the addition of a devoted corps of hardy and courageous soldiers to the British power in India.

Lord Hastings was now free to deal with central India. We get a very different impression of his methods compared with those of Lord Wellesley. No longer does the eager imperialist seek to force the hand of history by precipitate aggressions, treating the weak with a rigour deserved by the strong, to a voluble commentary of explanation and reproach. Instead we observe a statesman devising means to meet a dangerous situation adequate in range, planning, and resources, but always related to the scale of the problem before him, never pushing beyond the range of the possible or far beyond the bounds of the just; as anxious to conserve as to destroy and never seeking to strike before the moment was ripe. He enjoyed the wisdom of age without its loss of vigour, and an imperial vision without the haste or the ruthlessness which so often goes with it. With unhurried deliberation he planned each move, leaving the door of co-operation as well as of war open at each step. It is for this reason that it can be said that if it had been possible for the Maratha confederacy to enter into a working relationship with the British, it would have been done in the time of Lord Hastings. The Maratha power finally fell under the weight of its own ineptitude.

The situation in central India was never more confusing than in 1814. The one factor common to all parties was a dislike and distrust of the British. Sindia was restless and hostile but fearful and slow moving; the Peshwa scheming but irresolute; Holkar still torn with internal feuds; between them all roamed Amir Khan and his Pathans, while from within issued, like wild dogs from between the feet of their nominal masters, the Pindaris to slay, to burn, to plunder, and to disappear. In 1812 they raided the Mirzapur District and they were now, in their cantonments at Nemawar on the Narbada river, planning still more extensive expeditions. In the cold weather of 1814–15 they twice traversed the Nizam's dominions from end to end, plundered portions of the Madras Presidency and returned unscathed with £100,000

worth of booty, leaving a trail of devastation in their wake. By turning on British or British-protected territories they converted a distant nuisance and source of confusion into an active menace, and thus made counter-measures inevitable. They reckoned on their mobility to elude the slow-moving disciplined troops of the Company, but they left out of account the factor of combination. One disciplined force would have been as useless as Aurangzeb's army against the Marathas; several acting in isolation would have been little better. But the British were now able to organize a net of co-ordinated strong points, so that the Pindaris' success in eluding one force provided information for their interception by another. Their lack of fighting ability enabled very small forces to scatter any Pindaris intercepted, and the hostility of the countryside enabled these forces to be thinly spread. In the season of 1816–17 the net was more widely cast; the Pindari *luhburs* were harried and cut up and returned crestfallen to Nemawar. The scene was now laid for their final extinction. The news of the Madras raids converted London to the necessity of action and Hastings could plan a comprehensive drive for the cold weather of 1817–18.

Meanwhile the Marathas had not been idle. A threat by Sindia against Bhopal in early 1815 was called off on a demonstration of British support, and an attack by Amir Khan on Jaipur in 1816 withdrawn for the same reason. But the real centre of interest was at Poona. In July 1815, while the Gurkha war still remained undecided, the envoy of the Gaekwar of Baroda, Gangadhar Sastri, was murdered at the temple of Pandurpur. It was clear that the murder had been planned by Trimbakji the Peshwa's favourite who held Ahmadabad from the Peshwa and was much concerned in the disputes which the Sastri had come to settle under a safe conduct. The resident at Poona was Mountstuart Elphinstone, who conducted the British case with faultless skill even when he had to divine the Governor-General's wishes owing to the pressure of events and delays in the official post. He insisted on the arrest of Trimbakji and his transfer to the British for detention in Salsette. This was accomplished in September by a nicely calculated mixture of conciliation, understanding, and pressure. By the following spring the Nepal war was over and Hastings received a political windfall which perhaps proved the decisive factor in the whole complicated Maratha-Pindari affair. In March 1816 Raghuji Bhonsla II of Nagpur died and his nephew Appa Sahib, in order to secure his position as regent for Raghuji's imbecile son Parsaji, proposed a subsidiary treaty which had been declined by his uncle only two years before. Hastings was well served by his 'politicals'; Jenkins at Nagpur made a worthy third to Elphinstone at Poona and Metcalfe at Delhi. The treaty was ratified in July whereby a subsidiary force was introduced into Nagpur and a Maratha contingent organized under British advice. The net was tightening, and Hastings could proceed to his grand designs for ensnaring the whole Pindari group while intimidating the remaining Maratha powers in a single operation.

During the early months of 1817 the design took shape. More than 100,000 troops were employed, arranged in two great groups. To the north in Hindustan four divisions were stretched along the Ganges–Jumna line from Rewari in the west (under Ochterloney) through Agra and Etawah to Kalinjar nearly due south of Cawnpore. Each of these was a self-contained army, capable of acting on its own and fending for itself. In addition there were two observation corps at Rewa and in south Bihar. Hastings himself took command of this group, taking station with the Etawah force. To the south in the Deccan there were also four divisions under the command of Sir Thomas Hislop. They were stationed at Hushangabad on the Narbada, at Hindia on the same river to the west, in Berar and Khandesh. There was a reserve at Adoni in the Madras Presidency under Sir Thomas Munro. Sir John Malcolm was placed under Hislop as his political adviser. In Gujarat a further division was prepared whose function was to cut off bands which might retreat thither from the east or north-west. In addition there were the subsidiary forces at Poona and Nagpur, strong points, as it were, in areas of doubtful allegiance.

The campaign was to open at the end of the rains of 1817. The various forces were to advance south, west, and north, driving the Pindari bands before them from their haunts in the Narbada valley. The co-operation of the various bodies would make forays between them into British territory difficult and a return to their own country hazardous. Even Pindaris could not subsist permanently without a refuge for their families and a retreat for recuperation. At the same time the powers of central India, Sindia, Holkar, Bhopal, and lesser states were to be invited to co-operate with the alternative of war. Amir Khan was to be offered the lands he occupied as the price of disbandment and disarmament. The Peshwa and the Bhonsla would be saved from the temptation to intervene, it was hoped, by the presence of their resourceful residents with subsidiary forces at their backs. Such a plan, with its widely scattered forces, isolated posts, and distant reserve, might seem foolhardy in the face of a resolute and active opponent, enjoying the advantage of interior lines. The young Bonaparte with troops to match would have made short work of such a scheme. But there was no young Bonaparte, or any sign of one, nor was there the troops to match. Those that could move could not fight and those that could fight would not move. Among the leaders there was irresolution alternating with exasperation and despair. They shared no fixed common purpose, they had no common feeling save dislike of the British and only fitfully was the Maratha portion of them moved by feelings of national pride. The plan was in fact nicely calculated to the purpose in view and adapted to the conditions it had to meet. Hastings knew that he had to deal with a large number of disparate units whose suspicion of each other was nearly as great as their dislike of the British, who could be overawed or defeated in detail if dealt with simultaneously by a concerted movement, but who would, on

account of their mobility and variety, be capable of re-forming and regrouping indefinitely if dealt with one by one. There was no real danger in separation of forces provided co-ordination existed, and this Hastings was able to maintain with the help of the singularly able group of officers he had gathered round him.

Hastings was an adaptable as well as a comprehensive planner, and it was this quality which ensured the success of the plan. While it was still being revolved a new turn was given to events by the romantic escape of Trimbakji from his prison at Thana in Salsette in October 1816.[1] By the spring he was raising troops while the Peshwa was denying the fact and protesting his inability to secure him by turns. Elphinstone demanded his arrest and the conclusion of a more drastic treaty in place of that of Bassein. After weeks of tension Baji Rao again faltered and the treaty of Poona was concluded in July 1817. Trimbakji was renounced, his territory was surrendered to support the Peshwa's contingent provided for by the treaty of Bassein but never yet formed, and foreign agents were dismissed from the Peshwa's court. Above all, the Peshwa formally renounced the headship of the Maratha confederacy. This condition undoubtedly exasperated Baji Rao, but it was judged that the disadvantage of this was outweighed by the discredit it would bring him among the surviving and more formidable Maratha princes. While these events were proceeding the imbecile Bhonsla Parsaji was murdered in February 1817. Appa Sahib, now ruler beyond dispute, no longer felt the need of British support and began to chafe against the bonds of the subsidiary treaty in his turn.

In October 1817 Hastings began to move. Sindia was given the option of co-operation against the Pindaris and of abrogating the stipulation in the treaty of Surji-arjangaon for non-interference in the affairs of the Rajput states or of war. After the usual agonized hesitations he agreed on 5 November. As a result the way was cleared for relations with the Rajput states which they eagerly embraced. Within a few months Metcalfe at Delhi made treaties with nineteen of them, including Jaipur, Udaipur, and Jodhpur. At the same time Bhopal accepted a subsidiary treaty and Amir Khan agreed to disarm in return for confirmation in his existing territories as Nawab of Tonk. So far success had been brilliant. But on the day that Sindia signed his treaty the wavering Peshwa finally decided to strike. Elphinstone behaved with the utmost coolness. An attack on the Poona force was beaten off at Kirki and in face of a counter-attack the Peshwa retreated southwards. Within a few days Appa Sahib in his turn attacked his subsidiary force and met defeat on the Sitabaldi hills.[2] It was now the turn of Holkar. The Regency was inclined to accept terms similar to those

[1] Trimbakji was guarded by British troops for greater security. The escape was arranged by a Maratha *syce* or groom who wove directions into Marathi songs sung outside the prisoner's window.

[2] He was restored and then deposed again at the instance of Hastings. For some time he conducted a guerilla campaign and finally found asylum and obscurity at the court of Ranjit Singh.

offered to Sindia, but the Pathan war party gained control. The Regent Tulsi Bai was murdered and the army joined battle at Mahidpur, only to be defeated like the rest on 21 December. By the end of the year the whole Maratha confederacy was in ruins, the chiefs defeated or in subordination. There only remained the mopping up of the Pindaris and the remnants of the Maratha forces. After two defeats at Ashti and Korigaon and many twists and turns the Peshwa surrendered to Sir John Malcolm on 2 June. The Pindaris moved hither and thither with their usual speed, but though some slipped through the tightening net, the bands were dispersed for ever. The game had become too dangerous to play any longer. Chithu, the most daring of their leaders, fell to a tiger in the jungle to which he had fled. The campaign ended with the fall of Asirgarh in March 1819.

We can now describe the settlement of 1818. The breach with the Peshwa was beyond recall. His dominions were annexed and he himself, through the generosity of Malcolm, much regretted by Hastings, settled at Bednur on the Ganges with a pension of 8 *lakhs* of rupees a year. There he survived until 1851, leaving his claims and his grievances to his adopted son, the Nana Sahib.[2] The nominal head of the Marathas, and descendant of Sivājī, was restored to the principality of Satara. With this exception the Peshwa's dominions became part of the presidency of Bombay. This now ceased to be a seaport district and became the province of Marathas and Gujaratis (with the Sindhis to follow). Bombay city itself began its career as the port of western India, to be successively helped by the increasing size of shipping which made Surat less accessible, by the development of railways, which overcame the obstacle of the Western Ghats, and by the development of the modern cotton industry. While Marathi pundits mused in Poona, Gujarati and Parsi merchants flocked to the developing emporium. Commerce came into its own in the west, as it had already done in the east, but in this case European and Indian were on equal terms. In becoming the gateway of the east Bombay was also to become the outpost of the west. Farther east the child Raghujī III, grandson of Raghujī II, was substituted for the injudicious Appa Sahib in Nagpur. Berar was attached to Hyderabad in reward for the assistance of the Nizam's contingent and Saugor was detached to become the Saugor and Narbada territory, soon to be the centre of the campaign against the thags. Amir Khan settled down to respectability as the Nawab of Tonk while adjacent Bhopal was relieved of fears from Sindia and the Pindaris. Sindia preserved his state at the price of his supremacy in Rajputana and lands around Ajmir. With enough intelligence to understand the strength of the British power, but not enough to co-operate or the energy to oppose in time, Daulat Rao Sindia saved his state and his family fortunes by a hair's breadth. The Holkar state, shorn of Tonk and all influence, was suffered to remain, and under the able ministry of Tantia Jog began to revive. The Rajput states were happy

[1] Kaye, *Mutiny*, ed. 1897, vol. i, p. 73.

in their relief from Marathas and Pathans. They were not required to entertain subsidiary forces, but watch was maintained by British posts at Ajmir in the centre, at Delhi to the east, and in Gujarat to the south. Alone of the Maratha princes the Gaekwar gained territory as a reward for his fidelity.

It is incorrect to say that the Maratha confederacy was crushed, because it had been in dissolution since 1802 and largely by its own act. What really happened in 1818 was the substitution of British authority in central India for no authority at all, and the extension of paramountcy over the ancient Rajput states. The pages of Malcolm's report on central India at this time are eloquent of the devastation which prevailed and the exhaustion which the British discovered. A seat of anarchy was removed and in the course of it several disorderly states brushed aside. The larger consequence of the whole episode was the establishment of the hegemony of the Company throughout India up to the Sutlej river. To the east and north its frontiers had reached their natural limits in the Assam hills and the Himalayas, with only Nepal separating them in parts from the snowy range itself. To the west the Thar desert and the Rann of Cutch provided another natural barrier. Only in the Panjab could the frontier be said to be open, and there the human barrier of Ranjit Singh's Sikh kingdom stood firm and friendly. Elsewhere the principal surviving Indian states were islands in a sea of British territory, either surrounded completely as in the case of Oudh and Mysore, or so fenced in, as in the case of Hyderabad and Sindia's state, as to make concerted action impossible. Apart from these states the only large blocks of Indian-ruled territory were the tracts of central India from Nagpur to Orissa and Rajputana. At Nagpur itself was a subsidiary force, and the rest of the tract was so full of hill and jungle as to constitute no danger. The Rajputs were rendered harmless by their temporary exhaustion and permanent jealousies, and were effectively watched by the British posts as already described. The settlement of 1818 restored the unity of India to a degree more effective than had existed under the great Mughuls, the main difference being that whereas the British power was firm in the south but stopped short at the Sutlej, the Mughul had been firm in the north-west as far as Kabul, but had faltered in the Deccan. As the Mughul power wrecked itself in trying to stretch to Cape Comorin the British power was to strain itself in trying to reach Kabul. Henceforth India was a unit again and we can divide our attention between domestic and foreign developments.

Lord Hastings was fortunate in possessing a band of loyal and skilful lieutenants both military and political. In Elphinstone, Malcolm, Metcalfe, Munro, and Jenkins he had officers of real distinction who would have graced any service, and who had the gifts both of harmonious co-operation and independent command. But the major credit for this success must be given to Hastings himself. His political insight and strategical grasp were nicely matched; his gift for spacious planning

was balanced by a faculty for vigorous action, and in all his arrangements he showed the flexibility which is the mark of distinguished leadership. The observer cannot fail to notice another quality that stamps his work with greatness. Never dazzled by the extent of his resources or the brilliance of his prospects, he always sought to proportion his means to his end. His treatment of Nepal, the Marathas, and the Rajputs showed that he was no lover of annexation for its own sake, even though he was better equipped to undertake it than Wellesley had been. His conduct was determined but not minatory; conciliation mingled with his firmness. He was as conciliatory as Cornwallis without his occasional muddle-headedness; if he was severe in holding princes to their engagements, he was also strict in observing them himself. It is difficult to see what alternative there was to the policy he pursued because the Marathas themselves ruled out the possibility of an Indo-British partnership in central India, on the analogy of the Nepal settlement of the Himalayas. Hastings enhanced the British reputation for vigour and ability by the success of his comprehensive measures. But even more valuable to the stability of the British power was his practice of the virtues of public justice and conciliation. It was this which removed the memory of Wellesley's aggressive and bullying tactics and did much to strengthen belief in British justice and good faith.

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BOOK II

Completion and Consolidation, 1818–58

CHAPTER 1

General—From Hastings to Dalhousie

THE year 1818 marks the beginning of a new phase in the history of British India. The period of internal wars and struggles for supremacy is over; India can be treated as a unity once more in a way not possible since 1740. The Company's administration had become in effect the government of India: in the ensuing period we can divide events into foreign policy and internal administration. Abroad the note was one of rounding off dominion, while at home it was that of restoration and organization; the new feature was that it now became possible to speak of an 'at home' and 'abroad'. Along with this external rounding off and internal consolidation went the first signs of that cultural transformation which has since become a major Indian development. At first it took the form mainly of innovations or changes based upon western ideas, but the beginnings of an Indian response, which was later to vitalize the whole process, have also to be noted. The period now to be dealt with covers approximately thirty years from 1818 to 1848. Dalhousie's rule, which in some ways marks the consummation of these tendencies, is so intimately connected with the upheaval which followed it that it will be treated in a separate section. The plan to be followed will include some description of the India with which the British were confronted in 1818, and of their ideas for dealing with it. It will then trace the thread of high policy at the centre and thereafter treat with specific subjects, such as the Company's foreign policy, its organization of the administration and social, economic, and cultural developments.

The state of India in 1818 differed widely from its condition under Akbar or Shahjahan or even up to the death of Muhammad Shah in 1748. The political system of the country was in ruins. Not only had the former unifying authority collapsed, but the chief rival for its heritage had in its turn split into a number of rival factions. The British in this sense were not so much heirs of the Mughuls as the legatees of anarchy. The Marathas had divided into factions of whom the most

hopeful was that of Sindia. With the death of Mahadji in 1794 his successors had lost their grip while their most energetic rivals, the Holkars, had in turn allowed their power to dissolve in family strife. The Sikhs had usurped power without providing order in the north, while the once vigorous state of Oudh had subsided into corrupt senility. All over Rajputana ancient princely houses had failed either to keep the Marathas at bay or to control their own feudatories. With the rise of the Pindaris and the paralysis of the Marathas it can be said that virtual anarchy prevailed from the Thar desert to the borders of Orissa and from the Sutlej to the upper waters of the Kistna. When the British came to Delhi in 1803 they found the villages to be fortified posts, only paying revenue at the point of the bayonet, and the city itself divided into wards for the purpose of plunder by village gangs in the neighbourhood. It was not safe to visit the ruins without an escort for fear of bandits lurking behind walls, nor to travel unprotected on the main road from Delhi to Agra. Robber chiefs and local rulers were interchangeable terms and Metcalfe officially listed some of the neighbouring chiefs as the 'Plunderers' of this or that. Malcolm's report on central India and Tod's account of Rajputana told the same story. British rule or supremacy was accepted without enthusiasm or much hope, but with resignation as the only alternative to an indefinite continuance of anarchy.

Along with political loss of control and purpose went administrative collapse. None paid revenue unless compelled, and the business of administration became a scramble somehow to secure enough money to stave off military mutinies by meeting a proportion of the chronic arrears of pay. Officers inevitably took what they could for themselves in the process. The cultivator had no hope of improvement and much fear of extortion on every hand, together with the ever present risk of plunder, torture, and death from marauding bands. The merchants dwelt in constant danger of loss from dacoits or armies on the march and of extortion from hard-pressed governments. Not even their loans to the ephemeral governments of the day were safe. The well-ordered administration of Mughul times had disappeared, surviving only, if at all, in the records of the local hereditary village officials and in the traditions of the old governing families.

The social and cultural state of the country declined along with its political fortunes. The state of the country was in nothing more clearly revealed than in the spread of social diseases whose germs always lurk within civilized societies ready to multiply and break forth should favourable conditions arise. The most obvious of these was dacoity, of which the Pindaris were the supreme example. The dislocation of society drove adventurous, hopeless, or embittered spirits to a lawless life. They formed the material for princely armies or robber bands, each of whom recruited from the other as fortunes rose and fell. The landless or uprooted man looking for a leader and reckless from despair was a typical figure of the time. A specialized form of these

men were the thags, robbers and ritual murderers, who rose to prominence in these times and spread across central India to the terror of travellers and peaceful men. Suttee, or widow-burning, increased in vogue as the hand of restraining authority grew weak. As reason seemed to have lost its hold so superstition increased its sway. Astrology, always a popular adjunct of Indian life, rose to the status of a directing force. Pathological aspects of social life like infanticide and of religion, like hook-swinging, self-immolation, and throwing oneself before the processional car of a god, grew apace. Even religious devotees suffered from the general degeneration. Many ascetics, threatened like ordinary citizens with plunder and death, took to arms and formed bodies variously described as *nagas*, *bairagis*, *sannyasis*, or *gosains*. They can be traced back to the reign of Akbar, but their number increased with the general disorder. Examples are the Gosains under Himmat Bahadur who served Mahadji Sindia, and the Dadupanthis in the service of Jaipur.[1] The Sikhs were the supreme manifestation of this movement and the only body to achieve both statehood and the status of an independent religion.

Intellectual and cultural activities inevitably came to a standstill, for there was neither the security to encourage it nor the means to support it. Men of learning depended upon princely patronage and this patronage was now monopolized by soldiers and diplomatists. The tradition was maintained in the Sanskrit *tols* and the Muslim *madrasahs* but originality was lost and its influence on the community at large declined. There was little sign during these years of new thought or of creative religious achievement. Living religion retreated to the quietist sects, whose devotees haunted temples of Krishna or Kali, or retired to the banks of the Ganges at Benares or the Godavari at Nasik. Here and behind the *purdah* of many devout homes much true devotion lived on, but it had nothing to offer to the turbulence of the times save abstraction and retreat.

The arts of life suffered in the general malaise. Architecture, like learning, could not thrive without patrons. Temples and mosques gave place to forts. No great and few good buildings were erected after 1750. In Delhi the decline can be traced from the great mosque of Shahjahan through the decadent but still imposing tomb of Safdar Jang (1756) to the insubstantial and uninspired buildings of the nineteenth century. Only in Oudh was the building tradition maintained, and here confusion of styles and elaboration of repetitive detail betrayed confusion of mind and loss of inspiration. Painting, in its Mughul and Rajput forms, suffered a similar eclipse and by the nineteenth century only survived as a living school in the foothills of the Panjab. The local languages were rich in folksong but the only major literary development was the growth of Urdu under the patronage of the later Mughul emperors.

[1] See W. G. Orr, 'Armed Religious Ascetics in N. India', *Bulletin of John Rylands Library*, vol. xxiv, no. 1, Apr. 1940.

Throughout Indian India there was little sign of fresh cultural development, or glimmer of creative activity.[1] The most that could be done was to hold fast to tradition, the most that was hoped for was a return to former times. Indian society like the Mughul dynasty had lost the 'mandate of heaven'. Courage, energy, ability, devotion, and loyalty existed as ever in profusion but these qualities either wasted themselves in fruitless efforts and forlorn hopes or were enlisted in negative causes or destructive enterprises.

If we turn to British India we find superficially a somewhat different picture. Wherever the British went they restored order; commerce was possible, the revenue was punctually collected, and the courts functioned regularly. But man cannot live by peace alone any more than solely by bread. This peace was accompanied by no cultural revival, and save in Calcutta by few signs of intellectual activity. Indians were excluded from all responsible public life with the result that the best men stood aloof and estranged and power was largely exercised by the irresponsible agents of ignorant masters. The new rulers had passed through their first phase of naïve corruption, but their good intentions and growing experience had not yet made up for their former mistakes and ignorance of local conditions. In consequence their administration seemed aloof though efficient and cold and distant if no longer harsh. The British were splendid but alien. Mirza Ghulam Hussain complained of British 'aloofness, absorption in their own concerns and surrounding themselves with sycophants'.[2] When Bishop Heber was in Lucknow in 1824 he asked a jamadar who was complaining of the Oudh government whether he would not be better off under the British. 'Miserable as we are, of all miseries keep us from that', was the reply, and the reason, 'the name and honour of our nation would end.'[3] The British had to rescue an exhausted society from anarchy and threatened dissolution, organize it and their own dominions with due regard to justice and local conditions, to revive, if they could, the feeble spark of cultural life and to break down by some means the wall of partition which divided ruler from ruled, foreigner from native. Such was the scene upon which the more thoughtful of the Company's servants gazed on the morrow of Hastings's 'crowning mercy' in 1818. They were neither dazzled, jubilant, nor even elated at their success, for they were too conscious of the magnitude of their charge.

The young officers of Wellesley's day had found his exuberant imperialism and aggressive leadership much to their taste and their disappointed diatribes against his two immediate successors have not yet quite ceased to influence historical opinion. Their successors in juniority showed an equal zest in acquisition; Edward Thompson has well described the excitement of these men at the time of the last

[1] Note should, however, be taken of Shah Wali-ullah and his school of Muslim theologians at Delhi, whose work had important repercussions. See Book IV, ch. 5.
[2] Siyar-ul Mutaqherin, vol. iii, pp. 170–1.
[3] Bishop Heber, *Narrative of a Journey . . .*, vol. i, p. 405.

Maratha war, their feeling of being on the threshold of a new era with a world about to be conquered. Their seniors, on the other hand, had seen enough of wars and devastations and had become aware of the inherent strength of the society it had become their fate to control through its temporary weakness. Their note was that of caution. The former acolytes of expansionism were now counsellors of moderation. They believed that they were sitting on a social and religious volcano, quiescent and apparently burnt out for the moment, it is true, but liable to erupt into fresh activity at any moment. Metcalfe, writing like an old man at the age of thirty-three, emphasized his belief in the 'precariousness' of the British dominion; Elphinstone, steeped in the classics with the coolest of heads, feared 'that the belief that our Indian Empire will not be long lived is reason and not prejudice'; Malcolm, for all his soldierly optimism, considered 'that in an empire like that of India we are always in danger'; while Munro considered 'innovation the ruling vice of our government'. They saw danger from foreign invasion, danger from a military mutiny, and danger from a religious explosion. If none of these things happened the people might so far develop as to replace the British in control. 'This', said Elphinstone, 'would be the most desirable end to British rule', but it seemed 'at an immeasurable distance'.

The British dominions in India were now more extensive than Akbar's in 1600, for if his empire reached to Kandahar, Kabul, and Badakhshan it had stopped short at the Narbada. All India to the Sutlej and the Rajput deserts was now under British control; beyond lay the Sikh kingdom of Ranjit Singh, the loosely knit states of the Amirs of Sind, and the manifestly dissolving Afghan kingdom. The only stable government of the three was that of Lahore, but the Sikhs were themselves a minority and their régime really a military dictatorship by one community over two others. Two themes thus emerged during the next thirty years. One was that of foreign policy, which had as its motif the rounding off or completion of the British dominion within the limits of Hindustan. The other was the organization of the existing British supremacy and possessions into a new empire.

It was here, within the limits of British India, that a great policy decision had to be made. Granted the fact of dominion, how was the new *raj* to be administered? The simple solution of alien exploitation had already been ruled out as a result of the Bengal experience. India was to be administered for the benefit of the Indians. But what kind of administration? The solution which appealed to many on the spot was a virtual revival and continuance of the Mughul empire. The Company would replace the Mughul and his umara, would restore the administration along traditional lines, and would protect the country with their new model army. Trade would flow more freely than before, culture, the arts, and religion would revive under judicious patronage; new British would be old Mughuls writ large. This was the outlook of Warren Hastings and his friends and was implicit in the general

internal policy from that time on. Of course there would be 'improvements' such as the substitution of European for Indian agency in government, of British for Muslim criminal law and methods of administering justice. The whole tenor of British internal policy to 1818 was in the direction of a revived and improved benevolent despotism.

If India could have been wholly insulated from Europe and shielded from the ferment of ideas prevailing there, such a course might have been practicable. But even if ideas could have been prevented from taking wing to the East, the men on the spot were controlled by men in Britain who were themselves subject to them. The foreign rulers' ideal that everything should continue in its familiar groove was therefore shattered almost as soon as it was formed. The British agents were influenced by the currents of thought prevailing in Britain and their policy was shaped accordingly. To the views of men like James Forbes or Scott Waring who admired Hindu institutions and desired their revival and continuance were opposed the ideas of the progressive and religious schools of thought in Britain. The Age of Enlightenment included a belief in reason and a belief in progress; as embodied in the Utilitarian school it developed a missionary fervour and a belief that its principles were applicable everywhere. Its mouthpiece in Indian matters was James Mill, whose *History of India* was begun in 1809 and published in 1817. The latter was manifested in the Evangelical movement with influential leaders in William Wilberforce, the friend of Pitt, and Charles Grant in the Company's direction. For them Christian morals were applicable everywhere. They had a sacred mission, they believed, to introduce the Gospel into India, for Britain was now the trustee of India's moral welfare. These two schools of thought found little to praise in Indian life and thought. So much of Indian life was bound up with religion and tradition; to the Utilitarian this was superstition or the denial of reason; to the Evangelical not only this but also idolatrous or the denial of God.

Three broad tendencies of thought can be distinguished in the discussions of Indian policy during these years. There was first the Tory or conservative view, of whom the orientalist H. H. Wilson was perhaps the most distinguished exponent. Without altogether denying the possibility of improvements, they recommended extreme caution; they were impressed by the value and strength of Indian institutions; they desired above all their restoration and maintenance, seeing no possibility of their early collapse, and they were acutely conscious of the danger of provoking a violent reaction by unwise interference or hasty innovations. They wished to foster Sanskrit and Arabic learning, they opposed Christian missions, and they considered such measures as the prohibition of suttee as playing with fire. The second may be called the Liberal Tory view. It was to this school that the great administrators Metcalfe, Munro, Malcolm, and Elphinstone belonged in various degrees. They accepted the desirability of improvements and of the introduction of western ideas and values, but they were also

convinced of the value of the traditional institutions and the strength of traditional feeling. Cautious innovation was their watchword. They looked to an eventual integration of old and new.

> Let us [said Malcolm] proceed on a course of gradual improvement, and when our rule ceases, as cease it must, (though probably at a remote period) as the natural consequence of our success in the diffusion of knowledge, we shall as a nation have the proud boast that we have preferred the civilisation to the continued subjection of India. When our power is gone, our name will be revered; for we shall leave a moral monument more noble and imperishable than the hand of man ever constructed.[1]

The third school of thought may be called the radical with its rationalist and religious wings. Bentham and James Mill were the most influential rationalists with Macaulay, Lord William Bentinck, and Charles Trevelyan as followers; Wilberforce and the Clapham sect were the leaders of the religious Evangelicals. They advocated bold innovations, because they believed that prejudice must give way to reason and falsehood to truth. The light of reason and the light of the Gospel, once transferred to India, would shine of themselves. The Indians would convert themselves and the new order would begin.

It should not be thought that these schools represented distinct parties; they were rather tendencies in influencing those who determined policy whether in Parliament, the Court of Directors, or in the governing class at large. Temperament and chance modified logical distinctions. It may be said in general that there was a group for moving as little as possible, a group for making definite and planned innovations along western lines, and a series of gradations between the two. Through all the discussions can be detected the assumption that western civilization was on the march while Indian culture was static if not moribund; any changes that were made therefore must be in a westernizing direction. Secondly it should be noted that reform and innovation were now part of the English mental atmosphere. 'Improvement' was a magic word which even Tories applied to agriculture; few Englishmen could undertake anything without considering what improvements might be made.

The decisions which these schools of thought sought to influence were modified not only by their opinions but by the force of events, the weight of experience, and the prevailing assumptions of the British governing class. The force of events ruled out any serious attempt to sustain masterly inactivity; in many areas the confusion was such that there were virtually no precedents to follow. In many matters, as those of the criminal law or methods of administration, existing practice offended the humanitarianism, the conscience, or the sense of fitness of the West. In other cases new situations, such as the breakdown of authority in Bengal in the sixties, were such that they called for new remedies. And those remedies, where they were not simply restorative, like the attempt to revive village *panchayats*, were always inspired by

[1] Sir J. Malcolm, *Memoir on Central India*, vol. ii, p. 304.

western ideas and modes. On the other hand the full application of the radical policy was equally interdicted by experience and common sense. Official opinion, which could not be lightly disregarded, was generally against it, and was reinforced from time to time by such events as the Vellore mutiny of 1806. In sum a policy like Malcolm's was in fact pursued. At first the emphasis was upon continuity and the necessity of caution; from the time of Bentinck it was upon the desirability of innovation without forgetting the need for caution. Not until Dalhousie's time was confidence sufficient to drive ahead without recking much of consequence. This mood was sobered by the Mutiny which induced a caution sustained long after other forces had arisen which made such an attitude first unnecessary, then harmful, and at last dangerous.

These new forces were the Indian response to western ideas and innovations. Prior to 1818 there had been little response to the western challenge other than the military. Princes knew much of western cannons and western discipline, but nothing of western science or the rights of man.[1] It was in Bengal that the larger aspects of the western spirit first became known to the Indian mind. The widespread knowledge of English provided an ideological bridge; ideas flowed over in the persons of British lawyers and officials, missionaries, and disinterested men of learning like Sir William Jones. The radicals believed that these seeds would quickly sprout to replace the weeds of Indian tradition and were disappointed at the slowness of the process. A later generation virtually despaired and talked of the unchanging East. But the essential fact is that these ideas did begin to take root in the very years of which we are speaking. The germination and growth was much slower than expected, but the process had been set in motion, and as it developed it determined the great transformation which is modern India today. It is this process which marks the difference between mid-twentieth-century independent India and fifth-century Britain after the withdrawal of the Romans. In the one case there was an organic development from within, in the other a superimposed culture which remained exotic and alien. This movement owed its origin to the group of Bengalis of whom Ram Mohan Roy was the leading figure. During the second and third decades of the century they were working out the first Indian response, not to western power or diplomatic cunning but to western civilization as a whole. At the very time that Lord Hastings was completing the central edifice of British power in India, Ram Mohan Roy was tracing the lines of the first synthesis between East and West in India which was to transform that power by a process of internal development and finally peacefully to replace it.

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[1] With the partial exception of Tipu.

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CHAPTER 2

The Political Thread. Lord Hastings to Hardinge, 1818–48

We have seen the policy that led to the reunification of India in 1818 determined by the interaction of events and persons in India and Britain. In India the gainful and impetuous Company's servants were too much for the peaceful but also gainfully-minded directors. The ill-restrained urge for personal gain almost produced corporate bankruptcy and so provoked state intervention. From the time of Pitt's India Act onwards (and indeed ineffectively still earlier) the state was both humane and unaggressive in intention, but the steady dissolution of the Indian political system together with revived fears of French intervention produced a state of feeling in which it seemed less ruinous to move forward than to remain static. Wellesley moved too fast and too far, thus provoking a reaction, and it was left to Lord Hastings to complete the process with a kind of majestic instancy.

The interaction of interests and views continued into the new period. But it is to be noted that the vital decisions of policy were increasingly made in London rather than in Calcutta. The stream of policy, like the stream of ideas at this time, flowed from the West. Professor Philips has noted that no governor-general could hope to do much without the firm support of the ruling faction in Britain. Minto was embarrassed by its absence, and it is a part of the greatness of Warren Hastings that he accomplished so much with so insecure a basis of support in London. In general the rulers of achievement were those with strong support at home like Cornwallis, Wellesley (in his early years), Bentinck, and Dalhousie. This helps to explain why the rulers who were promoted officials from Shore to John Lawrence tended to be static and cautious in their conduct. Their appointments were largely gestures of esteem and they could not rely for support for new measures on a solid political body in London. We can now turn to the political thread from 1818 to 1848.

The justification of Lord Hastings's measures was their success. His debts made him anxious to retain office and his prestige and judgement made the home authorities willing to retain him. The final years of his rule are liable to be obscured by the drama of his early years. They were in fact studded with incident and developments of significance for the future. Looking abroad we have first to notice the acquisition of Singapore. On the final defeat of France in 1815 the island of Java, which had been governed by Sir Stamford Raffles for four years, was handed back to Holland as part of the peace settlement. A promising experiment in Indonesian administration thus came to an

end, but the fact cannot be overlooked that Holland was an ally of the British and that Java had been seized in 1811 because it had been occupied by the French while Holland was a victim of French aggression. Lord Hastings, however, saw the advantage of securing the sea route to China and the Far East. In 1819 he allowed Raffles to occupy the island of Singapore at the extremity of the Malay peninsula. Its position was a strategic one, its harbour was capacious and its occupants at that time Malay fishermen. Dutch objections were eventually countered by the exchange of the British settlements in Sumatra for the surviving small Dutch stations in India. Thus a new enterprise of the British in the East was set on its course; the port of call has become the centre of a highly productive region and shows signs of becoming another dominion. In 1867 Singapore became a Crown colony and so passes from our purview.

In India Hastings took one of those half-measures which was so out of character that it revealed the nervousness and perplexity of the British in dealing with the Mughul emperor. Their legal claim to Bengal still rested on the imperial grant of 1765. Wellesley had carefully avoided either recognizing Mughul suzerainty in 1803 or repudiating it. In fact he signed no treaty with Shah Alam, but promised him liberty and maintenance. To the emperor the Company was still officially a favoured son; by the Company the emperor was beginning to be regarded as a nuisance. In 1816 the presentation of *nazars* on behalf of the government, a symbol of inferior status, was stopped. But the issue of the Company's coinage stamped with Shah Alam's titles continued until 1835. At the same time Hastings encouraged the Nawab Wazir of Oudh, as a reward for loans during the wars, to assume the title of King of Oudh. It was thought thus to divide the Muslim allegiance, the Nawab Wazir being the political head of the Shias and the emperor being a Sunni. In fact this action brought little credit to the Nawab Wazir, being widely regarded as an act of rebellion. The Nizam pointedly refused to follow his example.

Lord Hastings showed a surer touch in dealing with other internal incidents. When the chief of Hathras defied the British in his fort in 1817 Hastings brought up such a weight of artillery as not only to reduce the fort itself but also to give notice that no aristocratic recalcitrance would be permitted. The lesson of Bharatpur in 1805 had been learnt. On the conclusion of the Maratha war the nest of sea pirates which still lingered on the coast between Kolhapur and Goa was dealt with. In 1820 they were finally dispersed and a scourge to commerce of the west coast which had existed since the days of Graeco-Roman commerce disappeared for good. A Muslim religious outbreak at Bareilly in Rohilkund was suppressed and an agrarian revolt in Orissa in 1816 was treated with a characteristic blend of firmness and conciliation.

In internal administration Lord Hastings must be given the credit of taking the first steps towards the development of the country. His

tours opened his eyes to the ruined nature of the countryside. In 1818 he gave orders for the repair of the Mughul canal system, whose waters had ceased to flow in the troubles of the mid-eighteenth century. In 1820 the water flowed again into the city of Delhi and thereafter commenced the great system of British irrigation. He commenced the restoration of roads, which, with the returning security of the countryside, had more than a purely military value. In Bengal he advocated the development of education, giving private support to English schools and becoming a patron of the new Hindu college in Calcutta.

These measures were gestures which showed the direction in which enlightened minds were moving. But in the vital matter of judicial and revenue administration he made a more positive mark. Measures were taken to reduce the block of legal suits and the rigid separation of the executive and judicial functions was modified by combining the office of collector and district magistrate. A beginning with Indianization was made by enhancing the status of subordinate Indian judicial officers. In the revenue department he set on foot the settlement of the new conquered and ceded provinces which bore fruit in the elaborate Regulation VII of 1822. In the south Munro was engaged in restoring the *ryotwari* system of land settlement under the Charter Act of 1813 after the encroachment of the Cornwallis system at the instance of Wellesley. In 1820 he became Governor of Madras. In Bombay Elphinstone became governor in 1819 and with deft and careful hands eased the transition from old to new in the newly acquired Peshwa's territories.

Hastings's closing years were clouded by the controversy over the Nizam's financial relations with the house of Palmer and Co. in whose Hyderabad branch he was personally interested.[1] He failed to intervene after irregularities had been exposed by the new resident, Charles Metcalfe, and might well have been recalled but for his personal friendship with George IV.[2] But this is the only touch of regency morals which Hastings took with him to India and cannot obscure the magnitude of his services in other directions.

At the time of Hastings's retirement Canning, disappointed with his prospects in England, accepted the Governor-Generalship. But the suicide of Lord Castlereagh in August 1822 diverted him to the Foreign Office and British India lost thereby a lively chapter in its history. Lord Amherst was a friend of Canning and was brought in by a political shuffle in London rather than by any particular merits. The directors approved him for his China mission in 1816 and because he was thought to be a man of peace, and Canning excused him as amiable. He wrote to Huskisson: 'I agree with you perhaps in thinking the appointment which takes place not a very *strong* one; but . . . Amherst is at least blameless. . . . Upon the whole he is as good a *barren* choice as could have been made.'[3] On this occasion Lord William Bentinck made a fruitless attempt to secure the appointment.

[1] The wife of Sir T. Rumbold, a partner in the firm, was his ward.
[2] C. H. Philips, *The East India Co. and the State*, pp. 225–8. [3] Ibid., pp. 239–40.

During a seven-months' interregnum India was administered by John Adam, the senior member of council. His brief reign was signalized by the expulsion of John Silk Buckingham, the editor of the *Calcutta Journal*, for undue freedom of criticism of public officials. Thus another feature and issue of modern life appeared on the Indian scene. Amherst arrived in August 1823. He had been told that there was now no occasion for further wars and that a period of peace was expected. But he had no sooner arrived than a fresh war cloud emerged which dominated his four and a half years of office. Within a month the Burmans occupied the island of Shahpuri off Chittagong; this was followed by aggression in Assam and war followed. The Burmans had been pursuing a course of expansion during the previous seventy years somewhat similar to that of the Gurkhas, and like the latter, they had no idea of the force against which they were now pitting themselves. The war dragged on till February 1826, bringing much loss and expense and little credit to the Company. The treaty of Yandaboo began the transfer of Burman territories to the British which was completed in 1886.[1] During the course of the war the dispatch of Indian troops by sea led to the military mutiny of Barrackpore in October 1824, which nearly caused Amherst's recall and would have actually done so but for political complexities at home. The checks in Burma led to unrest in India and this found an outlet in the defiance of Bharatpur on the occasion of a disputed succession. After his usual vacillation, which caused the retirement of Ochterloney, Amherst permitted Metcalfe to take measures for the final reduction of the fortress in 1826. Amherst retired in March 1828 and, perhaps in gratitude for his departure, was awarded an earldom for his pains. Like his contemporary 'goody' Goderich, he was a well-meaning man with no faults but the inability to rise to the height of sole responsibility.

Amherst's successor was a very different man. If Lord William Bentinck had a fault, it was not that of being colourless. He had been recalled from Madras in 1807 on account of the Vellore mutiny, for which the unwisdom of the Madras commander-in-chief had later been admitted to have been mainly responsible, and he never ceased to wish to redeem his reputation. He had served as a soldier in Spain (where Wellington disliked him) and he had represented Britain in Sicily and Genoa where his conduct gave some colour to the charge of impulsiveness.[2] He was an advanced Whig in politics, a supporter of reform, and a disciple of Bentham. He owed his appointment to the support of the directors, to the death of Liverpool who disapproved of him, and to the approval of Canning who had unexpectedly become prime minister. Even then he was only the sixth choice. Canning died shortly after the appointment, and before he reached India the high Tory and critical Wellington was prime minister. His career would probably have been brief and unhappy but for the advent of Lord

[1] See Book III, Chapter 3.
[2] For these episodes see J. Roselli, *Lord William Bentinck and Sicily*, Camb., 1956.

Grey's reform ministry in 1830, which provided him with steady support in the ministry as well as the direction.[1]

The directors supported Bentinck because he was a man of peace, a man of discipline,[2] and a man of economy. The Company's finances were once again embarrassed, as a result of the Burman war, and they were afraid to face the impending discussions for the renewal of the charter on a deficit budget. But the real significance of Bentinck was that he was a man of the left, who carried within himself the ideas of the new age just coming into power. By carrying out the directors' mandate for economy and by the good fortune of the advent of the reform ministry to power, he was able to give Indian policy a twist towards welfare and western innovation which it never afterwards altogether lost. The phrase 'We have a great moral duty to perform in India' was coined by the brilliant Ellenborough, but it was the man he sought to recall who gave it content and meaning.

Bentinck's first duty was to economize, and it was the hazards which surrounded economizers in India which made the directors welcome a general as their agent. His economy measures were extensive and severe but it was the comparatively minor measure of the abolition of double *batta*[3] in the Bengal army which gained him the title of the 'clipping Dutchman' and an opprobrium which even yet has not quite faded.[4] In dealing with military discontent which ran to personal discourtesy and an attempt at social ostracism he displayed a combination of tact with firmness of which his earlier career had not given much promise. Age had tempered his zeal with discretion and sobered impulse to the point where it enabled him to act where others had only talked. The economies were personally distasteful to him and he privately denounced the *batta* reduction as pettifogging and ineffective. In all he saved £1½ million by economies in the civil and military service and left the treasury which he had found with a deficit of £1 million a year with a surplus of £1½ million. Thus far he had the directors' enthusiastic support, but when he wished to use this surplus for Indian welfare, their ardour cooled. In India the government became again a going concern and in England the direction was able to face Parliament in more confident mood. The continued existence of the Company after the Charter Act of 1833 was in no small measure due to Bentinck's financial measures.

Bentinck's second great achievement was that of judicial and revenue reform. In the former department he abolished Cornwallis's provincial

[1] For friction with Wellington's ministry see T. G. P. Spear, 'Ellenborough and Bentinck', *Proceedings of Indian History Congress, 1939.*

[2] Bentinck was a full general.

[3] *Batta* was an allowance to troops when on active service. The area covered by *batta* was not reduced as the area of British authority extended. Hence the periodical disputes about its reduction. The new rule allowed half *batta* only in the case of troops stationed within 400 miles of Calcutta.

[4] An example of this is the legend that Bentinck proposed to sell the Taj Mahal for the price of its marble. See T. G. P. Spear, 'Bentinck and the Taj', *Roy. Asiatic Soc. Journal.*

courts of appeal and circuit which had been largely responsible for the huge arrears of cases. Persian as the Court language was displaced by the local languages in the lower and English in the higher courts. Indian ability was recognized by the increase in the powers and salaries (and so status) of the Indian judges. This measure was the more readily agreed to since it contained an element of financial economy. Where principle was still disputed finance had opened a way. In the sphere of revenue he was faced by the complaint that the system laid down by Regulation VII of 1822 had proved too elaborate and ingenious. At the end of 1830 he set out on his great northern tour, spending the summer in Simla and the winter in the plains, in order to inform himself at first hand of the situation. The result was the launching of the revenue settlement of the north-west provinces under the auspices of R. M. Bird. Taking ten years to complete, its principle was that of a semi-permanent settlement for thirty years which would both encourage the tenant to make improvements and enable the state to reap some of the benefits. It respected existing rights, being made with large landholders, cultivators, or village communities according to the locality. A secondary result was the discovery of the value of the hills as a place for work as well as for convalescence. His example was quickly followed, so that he may be said to have inaugurated that characteristic feature of British India, hill station life.

Bentinck's third great achievement was that of social and intellectual reform. His most resounding measure was the prohibition of suttee or the burning of widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands.[1] This evil custom, frowned on by the Mughuls, had increased in Bengal under British administration and its prohibition had been considered by every Governor-General since Wellesley. Bentinck acted where others had talked and found, when it came to the point, that the opposition was surprisingly weak. Also important was the campaign undertaken by Col. Sleeman from 1830 against the *thags*. These groups of robbers and ritual murderers, who formed both a plundering brotherhood and a religious cult, had also increased in central and northern India during the Time of Troubles. To these measures may be added the suppression of ritual child-sacrifice at Saugar island in Bengal and the active discouragement of infanticide. These steps marked a new feature of British rule; for they avowedly interfered with social and religious customs. The ground of interference was the universal law of humanity; it was now maintained that not even religious sanction could stand against the universal moral law.

From the correction of abuses Bentinck turned to positive innovation. The principle of encouraging learning and education had been embodied in the Charter Act of 1813. Bentinck gave the policy a new force and direction by laying down that the content of the learning encouraged should be western knowledge and the medium of instruction English. In this he was fortified but not anticipated by

[1] See further Book II, Chapter 7, pp. 203–4.

Macaulay, who had joined the council as law member in 1834 under the Charter Act of 1833. In 1829 he had written to Metcalfe of 'the British language, the key to all improvements' and in 1834, before Macaulay's arrival, 'general education is my panacea for the regeneration of India'.[1] The substitution of English for Persian as the language of the higher courts and of government business gave a powerful even if utilitarian fillip to the study of English and the spread of western knowledge. To this great measure may be added other examples of his forward-looking mind: the abolition of transit duties in 1835, the development of steam transport by river and ocean, the beginnings of tea and coffee cultivation and of iron and coal production, the planning of a network of roads, projects for drainage, and of irrigation canals,[2] and the abolition of flogging in the Indian army.

In his relations with the states and with foreign powers Bentinck continued the policy of non-interference and non-aggression which he had inherited. In the case of the states he had to face the increasing embarrassment which that policy was bringing to the government. The security with which rulers were endowed within and without and the lack of any field for talent or legitimate ambition led to irresponsibility, indolence, and decadence. Bentinck found no solution to this problem. He forbore as long as possible and only interfered when misgovernment had gone beyond a certain point of bearing. In Mysore Wellesley's raja proved incompetent and vicious. In 1831 the administration was taken over (as provided by treaty) and remained in British hands for fifty years. The Raja of Coorg was deposed in 1834 on account of his cruelty and the state annexed 'in consideration of the unanimous wish of the people'. The little state of Cachar was also annexed at the wish of the people, later to become a nest of tea gardens. Oudh staved off the fate of Mysore by promises of reform. Elsewhere, as in Jaipur and Gwalior, disturbances stopped short of the need of intervention. Beyond the border peace was maintained, but in 1831 the first measures were taken to open up the Indus for navigation and a commercial treaty was made with Ranjit Singh at Lahore. Bentinck was the first Governor-General to envisage a Russian menace to India, but it is safe to say that both his and Metcalfe's methods of meeting it would have been very different from Auckland's.

Bentinck announced his retirement at a moment of political change. During the year between his departure in March 1835 and the arrival of his permanent successor Sir Charles Metcalfe acted as Governor-General. He had been continuously in India since 1800 and had been Bentinck's right-hand man during most of his government. A liberal in sentiment, he was too experienced to desire foreign adventure and too rooted in habit to be radical in action. His liberalism, however, prompted him to one bold act. He repealed the rule of John Adam

[1] Bentinck Papers, Bentinck to Metcalfe, 16 Sept. 1829; and to Mancy, 1 June 1834.

[2] The Grand Anicut in Madras was cut in 1835–6.

requiring printers to obtain a licence before publishing a newspaper. This so alarmed the directors that he forfeited his chance of permanent appointment.[1] His year of office was in effect a year's extension of the Bentinck régime.

The governor-generalship was first offered to Mountstuart Elphinstone who declined it on grounds of health. The short-lived Tory government then appointed Lord Heytesbury. But the Whigs returning to office before he had sailed, cancelled the appointment in favour of Lord Auckland, a good Whig and a nephew of Lord Minto. Auckland was an able and conscientious man, not to be compared with Amherst, but he lacked the personality to dominate a situation and was prone to be influenced by spirits more ardent than his own. He had a vein of moral weakness, which led him to acts which still seem, in perspective, to be wholly out of character. His appointment was regarded as a 'safe' one, but his sponsors forgot that the quality which consists of lack of positive faults is apt to prove most dangerous in times of crisis. There is no position like that of sole ruler and no conditions like those of India more apt to reveal the feet of clay beneath the dignified figures of party politicians.

Auckland was faced with foreign problems not of his choosing as Bentinck found states' problems not of his devising. In intention he desired to continue Bentinck's internal régime and up to a point he succeeded. He broadened and sweetened the western rigour of the new education by providing some encouragement for Eastern as well as Western studies; he developed the irrigation policy inaugurated by Bentinck, and he made the first large-scale efforts to deal with the famine which visited northern India in 1837–8. In 1770 the government had looked helplessly on while Bengal was devastated; in 1838 nearly 40 *lakhs* were spent on relief measures. But the lack of good communications prevented the sovereign remedy for large-scale famine, the quick import of grain from a distance, from being supplied on a sufficient scale, and at least 800,000 people are thought to have died. He also implemented the directors' orders abolishing the pilgrims' tax and all signs of official connexion with temples or religious festivals. Thus the neutrality of the state towards religion was given that absolute character which it preserved for the rest of the British period. Towards the states his conduct was not so blameless. The Raja of Satara was necessarily deposed in favour of his brother for intrigue and the Nawab of Karnal deposed altogether for attempting to wage war against the Company. But when the directors disallowed a treaty which Auckland sought to force on the new King of Oudh in 1837, he failed to inform the king of the fact. This lack of candour is an instance of a new vein of Machiavellianism which appeared in British Indian policy at this time and disfigured it for some years.

The shadow of Afghanistan has covered Auckland's administration

[1] Metcalfe resigned the service in 1837 but lived to be Governor of Jamaica in 1839 and Governor-General of Canada in 1843.

so darkly that not even the charm and liveliness of his sister's descriptive writing have been able to lift it. The Afghan episode will be dealt with in Chapter 3; here it is sufficient to point out its connexion with British policy as a whole. The full story of the Afghan war has not been revealed because the parts played by the British Cabinet and Foreign Office are not yet fully known. But it should be remembered that Auckland had not one set of mentors but two. Apart from the eager politicals egging him on from Kabul and in Simla there was Lord Palmerston in the full tide of his masterful diplomatic career. It was Palmerston's object to undo the treaty of Unkiar Skelessi by which Russia had achieved a stranglehold on Turkey in 1833. He not only considered the possibility of Russia putting pressure on Britain through Afghanistan but the counter policy of putting pressure on Russia through the same region. A pro-British power in Afghanistan could influence affairs in Persia in which Russia was deeply interested, and in Turkistan beyond the Pamirs, across which the Afghan dominion spread into Badakhshan.

By the thirties Russian influence in Persia was such that the Persian siege of Herat with Russian help seemed to be a direct threat to India. It is significant that the siege was raised in 1838 on a protest from Palmerston. Russian sensitivity in the east to pressure from the West may well have encouraged Palmerston and the Whig government to persevere with the Afghan adventure even though its principle justification had now ceased to exist. A pro-British Afghan state would be a threat to the Russian position in central Asia just as much as a Russian-dominated Afghanistan would be a threat to India.

Be that as it may, the decision to move forward in the north-west, taken in 1838, determined the character of Indian government for the next period of years. From 1818 to 1839 India was substantially at peace. Only one war of importance occurred beyond her borders, and that was demonstrably forced upon the government. Internally disturbances had been occasional and limited in character; the keynote of the period was peace, retrenchment, and reform. During these years the foundations of modern India were being laid and the seeds were being sown of that Indo-British cultural synthesis which later provided the inner force of the Indian national movement. There followed ten years of successive wars, each leading on to the other in a logical sequence of aggression. The peace which followed was uneasy, being disturbed by the second Burman war abroad, by annexations and rising discontent at home. Not till after the storm of the Mutiny did India again settle down to peace and constructive administration. By then the spirit of the government was very different to that of the optimistic liberalism of the thirties. Constructive effort did not disappear altogether, but it was subordinated to power politics. A harder tone crept into the voice of authority. Indians had not only to complain of an 'aloofness' caused by British 'absorption in their own concerns' but also of a pride of race and achievement which judged Indians to be

inferior in both culture and character and saw no hope of improvement or regeneration.

The conduct of the Afghan adventure depended upon the maintenance of the Sikh alliance and the overawing of the suspicious but ineffective Amirs of Sind. The death of Ranjit Singh endangered the one and the loss of Afghanistan made it the more necessary to maintain a hold of the other. Lord Ellenborough, who was on his way to succeed Auckland before the news of the Kabul disaster was received, was not the man to meet a difficult situation with restraint or effect a withdrawal with prudence. A brilliant orator with flashes of real insight, he was vain and pompous, overbearing and irascible. He longed for glory which the situation did not permit and resented not only opposition but advice. His experience as Wellington's President of the Board of Control had fired his lively imagination and whetted his ambition for power. He was chosen by Peel's Conservative government in spite of his faults on account of his experience and ability. In two and a half years his changes of policy, his overbearing temper, and his theatrical gestures alienated nearly every responsible authority in the country. The withdrawal from Afghanistan was marred by contradictory orders and the farcical episode of the return of the supposed gates of Somnath from Ghazni.[1] Thereafter he superseded Outram in Sind, appointed Sir Charles Napier to sole military and political authority, and encouraged him in the measures which led to the defeat of the Amirs and the annexation of the country. Napier proved such an apt pupil that even Ellenborough entertained doubts of his conduct before the end.[2] Ellenborough's final exploit was the overthrow of Sindia's army in December 1843. The measure in itself was a prudent precaution in view of the threatening aspects of affairs in the Sikh Panjab; but its execution exemplified Ellenborough's weakness for using the maximum of force with the minimum of tact. A comparison with Lord Hastings's methods in 1817 illustrate the Governor-General's lack of judgement and the hardened tone of the Indian government. This exploit filled the cup of the directors' fears and indignation, and emboldened them to use their constitutional right of recall for the last time.

Ellenborough had little time for domestic affairs. But there is one measure for which he must be given his meed of credit. In 1843 slavery was finally abolished in India. The method adopted was to declare that the status of slavery did not exist and thus avoid the problems of compensation that so vexed the process of emancipation in the West Indies.

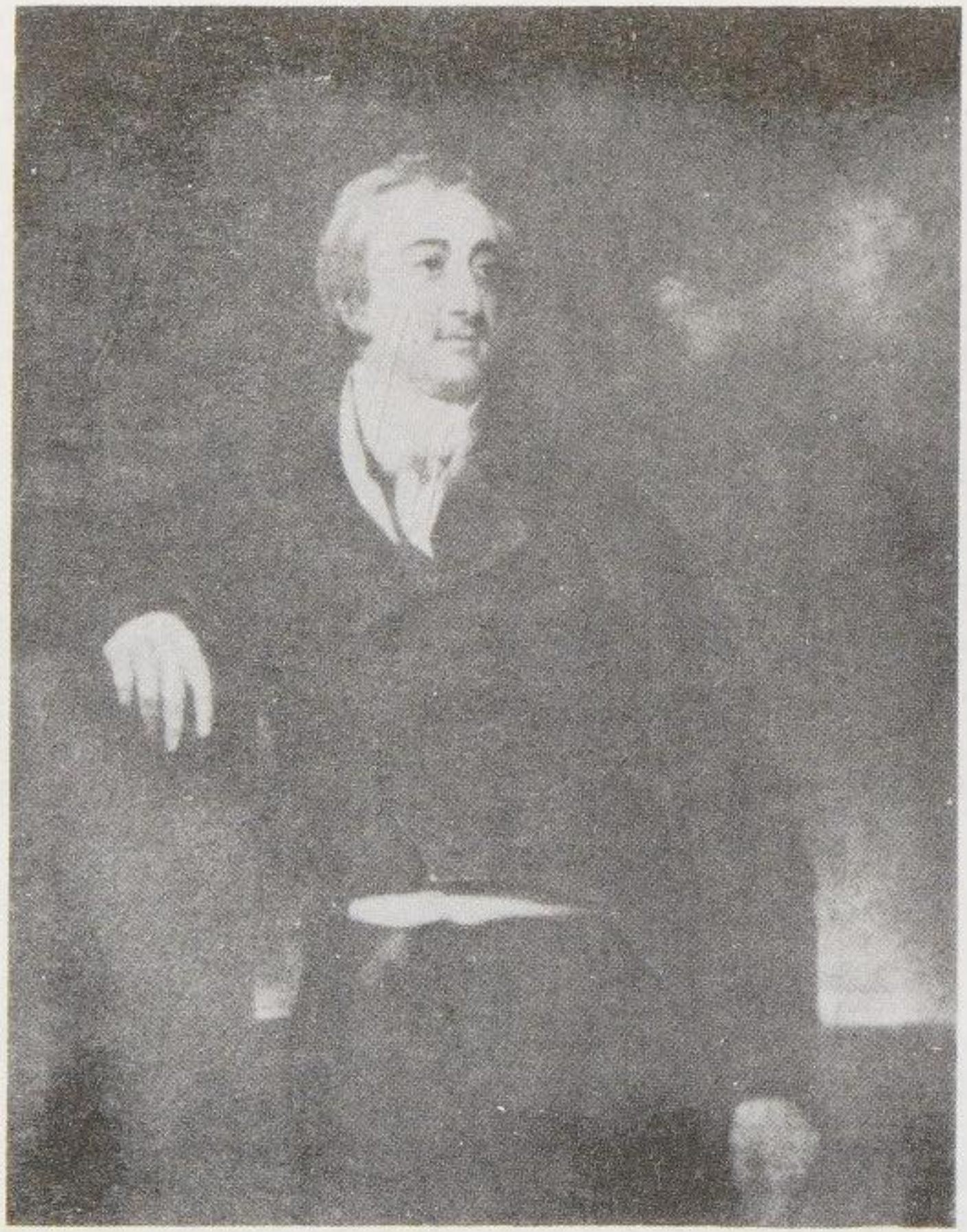
Ellenborough's successor was Sir Henry Hardinge, a seasoned soldier who had fought at Waterloo and a statesman who had held office as Secretary-at-War and Chief Secretary for Ireland.[3] His main

[1] The great temple of Somnath in Kathiawar was sacked by Mahmud of Ghazni in 1025.

[2] See Lambrick, *Sir Charles Napier and Sind*.

[3] He was also Ellenborough's brother-in-law, a fact which sweetened for Ellenborough the pill of supersession.

Ram Mohan Roy



a. Lord William Bentinck

b. Dalhousie

pre-occupation was the first Sikh war with its aftermath, which broke out in December 1845, within eighteen months of his arrival. But he was able to devote attention to internal matters as well. He developed the great irrigation system of the Ganges, and made the first plans for an Indian railway system. He supported education. In line with Bentinck he promoted the suppression of suttee and infanticide in Indian states and he undertook the suppression of human sacrifice in the hill tracts of Orissa. Under the lead of John Campbell the custom was stamped out between 1847 and 1854.

This period of thirty years can be divided at the year 1839. The first twenty-one years was a period of peace disturbed only by the first campaign in distant Burma and the brief alarm of the Bharatpur defiance. It was the longest period of tranquillity that India had known since Aurangzeb left Delhi for the Deccan in 1681. But it was not only a period of passive peace; it was also a period of active and vital reform. It saw the broad organization of the whole fabric of British administration in India. Before 1818 we can speak of the British *power in* India; after 1839 it is more correct to speak of the British *empire of* India. A dynamic force within the country had become its ruling authority. But the actions of the British did not stop short at organization. There were, in addition, a series of innovations which laid the foundations for the development of the India of the twentieth century. These innovations were all in a westernizing direction. Though presented as additions or alternatives to existing institutions, they constituted in effect a challenge to the past. The significance of these measures of the British was matched by that of the first responses made to the challenge by Indians in Bengal. These centred on Ram Mohan Roy and his group in Calcutta.

The last nine years of this period presented a marked contrast to the earlier years. The administrative reforms, the cultural innovations, and the economic projects went on as before, though arousing less public attention and pursued with less obvious enthusiasm. Their place in the public eye was taken by the series of campaigns, Afghan, Sindhi, Maratha, and Sikh which engrossed the attention of government, soldiers, administrators, and non-officials alike. A certain hardening was perceptible in the whole tone of the British government, indeed in the attitude of Europeans generally to India. The advocates of 'westernism' became more strident and aggressive, the conviction grew that nothing good was to be found in the Indian past, and that all reform must be *western* reform. The earlier faith of men of high position in a quick and favourable response to the ideas of the West, along with the patience and willingness to wait, faded into indifference and scepticism. India had little to contribute to the future from her own past it was more and more widely believed, and no serious intention of abandoning it in favour of the western present. The attitude of trusteeship for an old and embarrassed estate tended to change to an attitude of ownership of a derelict property. The series of wars and

annexations deepened both the sense of superiority and of being conquerors which had long been prevalent among junior, subordinate, and commercial Europeans. The sense of trusteeship, where it continued to exist, was no longer that towards a ward in chancery, until a minor's coming of age, but that to a ward permanently absent or incapable. In the eyes of the governing class both in England and India, India ceased to be the scene of an impending cultural transformation, to become a conquered territory peopled by communities wedded obstinately to obscure and archaic cultures, strange in their habits, mysterious in their thoughts and hostile to all change. The myth of spontaneous reform was giving place to the counter-myth of the unchanging East.

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CHAPTER 3

Foreign Policy 1818–48: Burma and the north-west

THE establishment of the Company's dominion in 1818 brought with it a new problem of external relations as well as of internal development and treatment of the surviving Indian princes. The new frontiers were the Himalayas to the north, the Sutlej and the Rajput deserts to the north-west and west, and the tangled Assam hill tracts to the north-east. The only power in the north was the Gurkha kingdom of Nepal, with whom Lord Hastings had already tried conclusions and with whom the settlement of the treaty of Khatmandu was to outlast the British period. The Gurkhas were to prove an asset rather than a liability. To the north-west, between the Sutlej and the Indus, lay the Sikh kingdom of Ranjit Singh. Relations were regulated by the treaty of Amritsar in 1809 which allowed the Sikhs to expand westwards and northwards at the price of leaving Sind and the Cis-Sutlej Sikhs alone. In Sind the five disorderly Amirs of Sind held sway, emancipated for the moment from both Mughul and Afghan dominion, but incapable in themselves of either serious aggression or concerted defence. Beyond lay the Afghan kingdom, at this time torn by feuds between the Barakzai brothers and the old Abdali dynasty and rivalries amongst the brothers themselves. 1818 was the year when the eldest of the brothers was murdered by Kamran Shah and Ghazni was seized by Dost Muhammad Khan. Beyond was Persia, just emerged from the shadow of the Franco-Russian alliance of Tilsit in 1807, which had cost her Georgia, and further threatened by a Russia refreshed and strengthened by victory. Russia enjoyed all the prestige of the vanquisher of Napoleon, but she had lately been an ally and her proceedings in eastern Europe and Asia Minor had not yet caused the finger of alarm to be pointed at large-scale maps of Asia. Continuing our tour, the seaboard of India was now secure with the defeat of the French and the annexation of the Île de France (now Mauritius).[1] Though Java had been restored to the Dutch, the Dutch were themselves dependent on British sea-power. In addition the founding of Singapore in 1819 provided the British with a strategical strongpoint of incalculable value. There only remained the north-eastern frontier where a tangle of hill and jungle separated the plains of eastern Bengal from the rising power of the kings of Ava in the Irrawaddy valley and the Siamese kingdom in the basin of the Mekong.

If we look at the situation as a whole we shall observe that the British

[1] Mauritius was its original Dutch name after Prince Maurice of Orange, successor to William the Silent.

now controlled two of the three areas necessary for the secure domination of southern Asia. Command of the sea precluded maritime attack and secured control of the eastern border of the region, the East Indian archipelago. The Dutch here were virtually British agents since their power depended on the sufferance of British sea-power. The British hold over the Indian land mass was now nearly complete. The only thing they lacked which their Mughul predecessors had enjoyed was the control of the north-western rampart giving access to Persia and central Asia on the one hand and to the Indus valley and India on the other. The early Mughuls enjoyed this advantage by virtue of their possession of Kabul and Kandahar, covering the approaches to the Indian passes and opening a way to Persia through Herat, and of Badakhshan covering the approach to Kabul through the Hindu Kush range. It was therefore clear that the main energies of the British would necessarily be concerned with the problem of establishing a similar position on this side. It was long thought that control of the passes and the Afghan plateau was essential to Indian security; Shahjahan's loss of Kandahar was cited as the first great blow to the empire and Nādir Shah's seizure of Kabul as the beginning of the end. In fact, whatever truth this contention may have had for the Mughuls, it did not apply to the British with the same force, because the British had two resources denied to their predecessors. They possessed sea-power, and with it the ability to reinforce the land mass from overseas as well as from within, and they had in western military discipline and artillery the modern equivalent of the central Asian horsemen and Turkish artillery. They had the resources to repel an attack on the borders of India even if they had not the strategical position to prevent the attack being made. That position could only be modified if Russia advanced with sufficient troops to restore the balance of military force on the Iranian plateau. In 1818 Russia was still far off, but it was these considerations which gave Russian policy its enigmatic and sometimes sinister significance for Indian statesmen during the nineteenth century. If Russia appeared on the Iranian and Afghan plateau in strength she would threaten the British position in India. But could she, and would she? The solution of the strategical problem therefore resolved itself into securing a defensible line without necessarily advancing as far as the Hindu Kush and the Persian deserts. It was around the answers to these questions that the controversies of Indian foreign policy revolved, and it was the problem of a practicable defensive line which exercised the minds of soldiers and statesmen. By 'practicable line' is meant one which gave reasonable security and which could both be achieved and maintained within the limits of the diplomatic, military, and financial resources available. And it must always be remembered that the problem could not be worked out in a political vacuum, but was complicated by the presence of virile and warlike tribes, and of intriguing and on occasion powerful states in the area concerned.

During his five-year march to Indian supremacy Lord Hastings had

always kept a wary eye on Ranjit Singh in the Panjab who seemed to be emulating Mahadji Sindia in building up a powerful state based on the loyalty of a minority community and organized on western military lines with a leavening of European leadership. When he had therefore completed his work without interruption from the north and enjoyed four further years of peace he not unreasonably drew the conclusion that India could look forward to a period of external calm. Scarcely had his successor Amherst arrived in Calcutta, however, when he was faced with a threat from the north-east. Burma had long been the seat of a Buddhist kingdom whose dynasties had shared fully in the common vicissitudes of oriental kingdoms. In the year of Plassey Alompra, the founder of a new dynasty, conquered the province of Pegu and so added the Irrawaddy delta to his upper Burman realm of Ava. The Thais of Siam were next defeated, their capital Ayuthia destroyed in 1768 and Tennasserim annexed (1766). King Bodawpaya added Arakan in 1785, Manipur in 1813, and Assam in 1816. As successors of the kings of Arakan the Burmans called on Lord Hastings to surrender Chittagong, Dacca, and Murshidabad in 1818. But a defeat by the Siamese and Hastings's disinclination to engage in fresh wars induced the respective parties neither to repeat or to resent the demand. As a prelude to their career of expansion the Burmans had repelled invasions from China in 1765–9, and since China was then regarded by them as the leading power in the world their pride and confidence were inflated accordingly. The Burmans were arrogant, isolated, and ignorant. They had no conception of the nature of western civilization and suffered acutely from the megalomania which is apt to come from prolonged success within narrow confines.

The first Burman war thus started as one of the simplest cases of aggression in modern times. 'Brought into contact with the English they felt no fear: Ava was the centre of the universe, its arms invincible, its culture supreme.' 'From the king to the beggar they were hot for a war with the English.' In September 1823 they attacked the island of Shahpuri near Chittagong and made hostile moves on the Assam border. British demands for satisfaction being designedly ignored, war was declared by Amherst in February 1824. The war lasted for two years and brought little credit to either side. The Burmans suffered for their ignorance and folly, the British for their obstinacy and lack of adaptability. The British planned to seize Rangoon by sea and advance up the Irrawaddy. This sound strategy was put into force on the brink of the rains in May, with the result that the army found itself cooped up in an unhealthy swamp, unable to move and decimated by sickness. Subsidiary expeditions through Manipur and Arakan were baffled by the climate and the difficulty of the country. The Burmans had a leader of genius in Bandula, but after his death in April 1825 their only hope lay in the climate and the terrain. As the British learnt to adapt themselves to the new conditions the defeat of the Burmans became certain. Tenasserim was taken from the sea in the autumn of 1824. The

final advance in the autumn of 1825 brought the King of Ava to terms and peace was signed at Yandaboo, sixty miles from Ava, in February 1826. The Burmans ceded Arakan and Tenasserim, withdrew from Assam and Cachar, and recognized the independence of Manipur. They agreed to pay an indemnity of £1 million sterling, to conclude a commercial treaty, and admit a British resident.

The second Burman war broke out in 1852 as the result of commercial disputes. The British resident at Ava had previously been withdrawn with the result that disputes in Rangoon were handled by bellicose governors on the one hand and tactless ships' captains on the other. Dalhousie was averse to annexation in this direction and war was actually precipitated by the hastiness and mutual misunderstandings of subordinates on both sides. Once war was declared Dalhousie took care to avoid the mistakes of Amherst's general Sir Archibald Campbell and he showed unusual restraint when his measures proved completely successful. The people of lower Burma, who were only partly Burman, welcomed the British as deliverers; the health of the troops was better than in many cantonments; the battle casualties were 377 and the cost less than £1 million sterling. Dalhousie annexed Pegu but refused to advance farther. King Pagan was succeeded by King Mindan under whose judicious rule friendly relations were maintained until the accession of King Thibaw. This war marked the real beginning of the British period in Burma because the earlier annexations had only been on the fringes of the real Burman dominion.

We now turn to the north-west. Until the end of the century the British were more concerned with the south of India than the north. Wellesley diverted their attention to the Marathas in the centre. It was their defeat and the capture of Delhi, the gateway of the north-west, that first brought the British into contact with the new problems that awaited them. Palm-trees and mango groves were now replaced in their imaginations by sandy wastes and arid mountains; the elephant by the camel. We may start our survey by noting the one point which continued fixed for over thirty years in the shifting scene of northern politics. This was the treaty of Amritsar in 1809 concluded by Charles Metcalfe with Ranjit Singh as the fruit of one of Lord Minto's missions. This fixed the line of the Sutlej as the boundary between Sikh and British influence; henceforward the Sikhs on the east side of the river, or the Cis-Sutlej states, were under British protection. From this agreement flowed in due course the Patiala and Eastern Panjab States Union or P.E.P.S.U. Until Ranjit Singh's death in 1839 the tract from the Sutlej to the Indus was in strong and friendly hands. The Lahore kingdom in fact was one of the few really successful buffer states in history.

The dissolution of authority to the south and west of the Panjab should next be noted. Sind had been subject to the Mughuls from 1591 to 1750. It then passed to the new Afghan Shah, Ahmad Shah Abdali. In 1783 Mir Fath Ali Khan Talpura overthrew the last of the Kaloras

and thereafter, as the hand of the Afghan Shah Taimur grew weaker, became virtually independent. Tribute continued to be claimed but was usually withheld. Sind was parcelled out between three main branches of the clan, the Shahdadpur family ruling central Sind from Hyderabad, the Mirpur or Manikani family at Mirpur and the Sohrabanis at Khairpur. Mir Fath Ali Khan died in 1802 and thereafter central Sind was subdivided between his son, brothers, and nephews, one of their number being vaguely acknowledged as rais or chief. There were thus three main branches, one of whom was subdivided into four. These were the Amirs of Sind, and since the Afghans were too distracted to reassert their overlordship, the Amirs too indolent to strive for supremacy and too foolish to unite, the country was virtually divided into a number of independent but petty states.

In Afghanistan the dissolution came not by natural increase but by battle and murder. Ahmad Shah Abdali was chief of the Sadozai clan of the Abdali tribe whose name he changed to Durrānī. He ruled from Kandahar and aimed at uniting all Afghans under his sceptre. When he died in 1773 his rule extended to Kafiristan and the Oxus on the north, to Kashmir, the Sutlej, and the Indus on the east, to the sea on the south, and to Persia and Khorasan to the west. In modern terms it stretched over Pakistan and Afghanistan and parts of what are now Persia and Russian Turkistan. It was a short-lived revival of the realm of the Ghaznavids and the Ghorids. Ahmad Shah left eight sons of whom the second, Taimur, became Shah. In his time the Sikh power grew in the Panjab and Sind was lost. Distrusting the Durrānīs he leaned on Payandah Khan, chief of the Barakzai clan. Taimur, on his death in 1793, left twenty-three sons, while Payandah Khan in his turn left twenty-one in 1799. Such fruitfulness was too much for stability and amid the interlocking rivalries of the several brothers and the two families the Durrānī empire perished. Zaman Shah, after a march to Lahore in 1798, was deposed and blinded. His brother Mahmud Shah seized the throne with the aid of Payandah Khan's eldest son, the king-maker Fath Khan. In 1803 he was discarded in favour of the ill-fated Shuja-ul-Mulk (another son of Taimur Shah), to be restored by Fath Khan in 1809. The Durrānīs were now bound to Barakzai tutelage. A final explosion occurred in 1818; Fath Khan was murdered but Mahmud Shah and his son Kamran were confined to Herat; Kamran succeeded Mahmud in 1829 and acknowledged Persian suzerainty. The rest of the country was parcelled out among the Sadozai brothers. The ablest of these was Dost Muhammad Khan. He held Ghazni and gradually rose to eminence during twenty years of struggle and intrigue. To Ghazni he added Jalalabad and in 1826 seized Kabul and proclaimed himself Amir. He lost Peshawar to the Sikhs in 1834, but easily repulsed an attempt by Shah Shuja in the same year to recover the family throne.

The dissolution of authority in the north-west promoted the security of the British in India, but they were haunted by fears of more distant

threats. The first of these was the French in the time of Napoleon. His Egyptian expedition, and his known fascination with the East thereafter, caused the British to transfer the French threat in their minds from the south of India to the north-west. This directed their attention to Persia as the nearest stable power who might stand in the way of a French advance. In 1801 Wellesley sent the young John Malcolm to Persia where he concluded commercial and political treaties. But Persia was more concerned with Russia on her border, who had seized Georgia in 1801, than France on the Atlantic, and introduced French agents to counteract the Russians. The *entente* between Napoleon and the Tsar Alexander at Tilsit in 1807 reversed the Persian tendency to look to France as a counterpoise to Russia and drove her back into the arms of Britain. Minto strove to take advantage of this by sending Malcolm to Teheran on a second mission, only to find that the London Foreign Office had also dispatched its own agent in Sir Harford Jones. An undignified episode ended in the conclusion of a treaty in 1809 by Jones by which Persia undertook to deny any European power a passage through Persia and to help British India if attacked. Britain undertook to aid Persia in the event of an attack by a European power either with troops or with a subsidy and a loan of officers. At the same time Elphinstone's mission to Peshawar produced a treaty with Shah Shuja which proved abortive because of his fall immediately afterwards. It was hoped by these means to turn Persia into a buffer between the Franco-Russian menace and India. But Britain and India were both too distant, Persia too weak, and Russia too near for the policy to prove successful. The amount of aid and comfort required by Persia was beyond the powers of a Britain standing at bay against a French-controlled Europe and a British India still absorbed by the Maratha problem. In 1811 Russia again attacked and by the treaty of Gulistan in 1813 excluded Persian vessels from the Caspian. British officers were lent and Persia hoped thus to strengthen her army against the Russians. The turning-point came when Shah Fath Ali was compelled by popular feeling to attack Russia in 1826. Defeat made it clear that the army was no better and led to a humiliating peace in 1828. Henceforth Russian influence grew at the expense of the British. Russia hoped to control central Asia through Persia and Persia to recover her lost prestige in that direction. In 1832 Khorasan was conquered on this plan and in 1834 the pro-Russian Muhammad Mirza succeeded his grandfather as Shah.

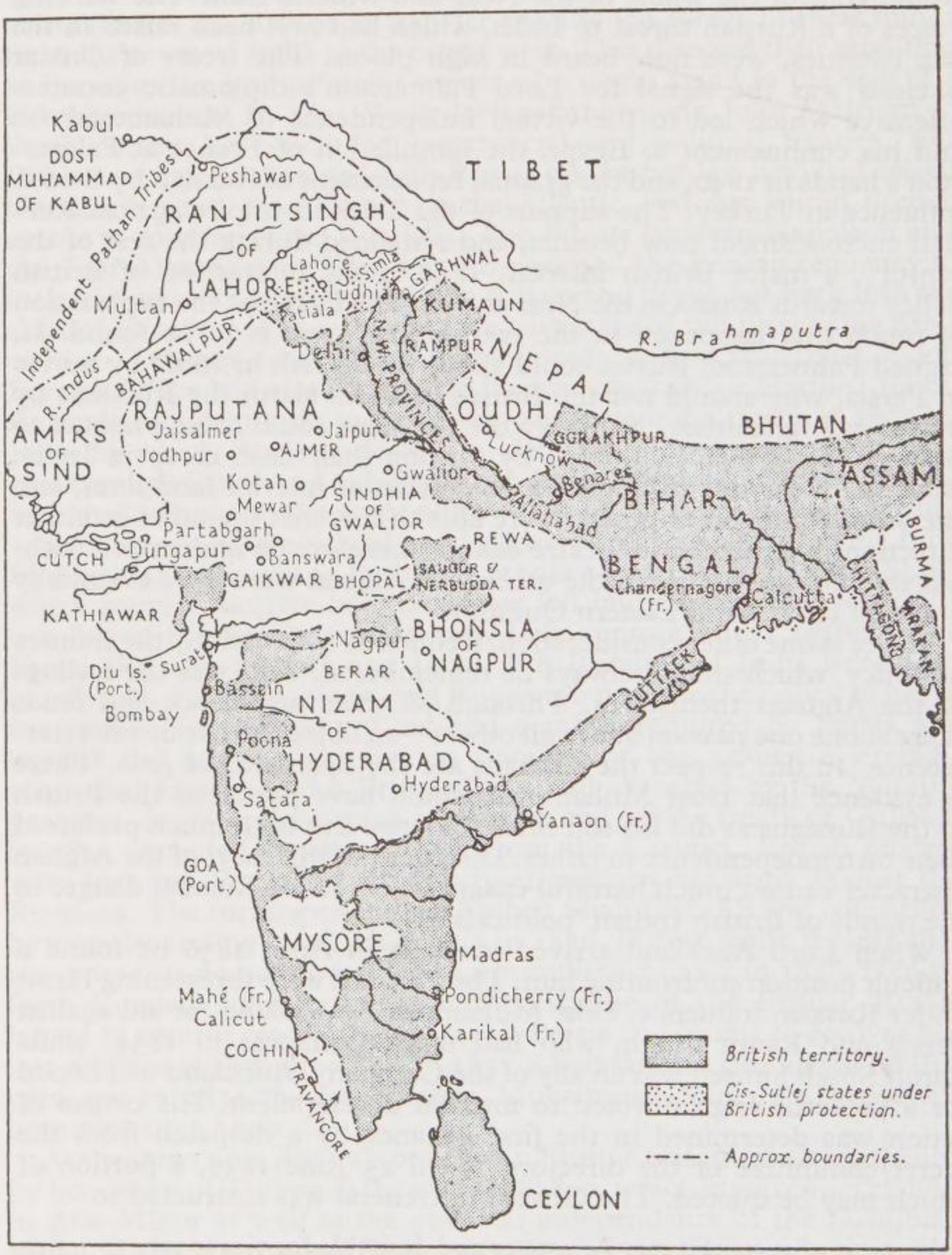
At the same time Russia's position in Europe was much strengthened by her defeat of Turkey in the war of 1828–9, which involved accessions in Asia Minor as well as the practical independence of the Danubian principalities (the modern Rumania). She followed this up by the treaty of Unkiar Skelessi in 1833 which came near to establishing a Russian protectorate over Turkey. Russia would protect the Sultan from Muhammad Ali of Egypt, of course at a price; the process of weakening from without had been replaced, as in Persia, by the process of under-

mining from within. It looked as though, before long, the Russians would control the whole of the Near and Middle East. The warning voices of a Russian threat to India, which had first been raised in the late twenties, were now heard in high places. The treaty of Unkiar Skelessi was the signal for Lord Palmerston's diplomatic counter-offensive which led to the virtual independence of Muhammad Ali and his confinement to Egypt, the humiliation of France at Palmerston's hands in 1840, and the gradual replacement of Russian by British influence in Turkey. The support of the Turkish empire against Russian encroachment now became, and remained during the rest of the century, a major British interest. It is in the interaction of British policy towards Russia in the Near and Middle East that the explanation of much that happened in the two Afghan wars is to be found. If, argued Palmerston, Russia could alarm the British in India by moves in Persia, why should not the British in India alarm the Russians by moves in Afghanistan? Similarly the Russians could bring pressure to bear on the British in Europe by making their flesh creep in India. Both sides, the one through the possession of interior land lines, and the other through sea-power, were able to threaten the other in either direction. Events in one theatre cannot therefore be understood without reference to events in the other; the Afghan wars were essentially a part of the general Eastern Question.

There is one other consideration, frequently forgotten by the framers of policy, which should always be remembered. This was the feelings of the Afghans themselves. Through all their turbulence and feuds there shone one passion above all others—an objection to outside interference. In this respect the Afghans are the Spaniards of Asia. There is evidence that Dost Muhammad would have preferred the British to the Russians as did his son Sher Ali later. But both much preferred their own independence to either. Disregard of this facet of the Afghan character caused much harmful exaggeration of the Russian danger in the minds of British Indian 'politicals'.

When Lord Auckland arrived in India in April 1836 he found a difficult position confronting him. The Persians were threatening Herat under Russian influence, Dost Muhammad was asking for aid against Persia and Ranjit Singh, who had taken Peshawar in 1834, while Ranjit Singh himself was an ally of the Company. Auckland had hoped for a peaceful reign devoted to internal development. His course of action was determined in the first instance by a despatch from the secret committee of the directors, dated 25 June 1836, a portion of which may be quoted. The Governor-General was instructed to

> judge as to what steps it may be proper and desirable for you to take to watch more closely, than has hitherto been attempted, the progress of events in Afghanistan, and to counteract the progress of Russian influence in a quarter which, from its proximity to our Indian possessions, could not fail, if it were once established, to act injuriously on the system of our Indian alliances, and possibly to interfere even with the tranquillity of our own territory.


Kabul
DOST MUHAMMAD OF KABUL
Independent Pathan Tribes
Peshawar
TIBET
RANJITSINGH OF LAHORE
Lahore
Simla
GARHWAL
KUMAUN
Multan
Ludhiana
Patiala
R. Brahmaputra
Delhi
N.W. PROVINCES
RAMPUR
NEPAL
R. Indus
BAHAWALPUR
RAJPUTANA
OUDH
BHUTAN
AMIRS OF SIND
Jaisalmer
Jaipur
Jodhpur
AJMER
GGRAKHPUR
Lucknow
Gwalior
Kotah
Mewar
SINDHIA OF GWALIOR
Benares
ASSAM
BIHAR
Allahabad
Partabgarh
Dungapur
Banswara
REWA
CUTCH
GAIKWAR
BHOPAL
SAUGOR & NERBUDDA TER.
BENGAL
Chandernagore (Fr.)
Calcutta
BURMA
CHITTAGONG
ARAKAN
KATHIAWAR
Nagpur
BHONSLA OF NAGPUR
Diu Is. (Port.)
Surat
BERAR
CUTTACK
Bassein
Bombay
NIZAM OF HYDERABAD
Poona
Hyderabad
Satara
Yanaon (Fr.)
GOA (Port.)
MYSORE
Madras
Mahé (Fr.)
Calicut
Pondicherry (Fr.)
Karikal (Fr.)
COCHIN
TRAVANCORE
CEYLON
British territory.
Cis-Sutlej states under British protection.
Approx. boundaries.

INDIA, 1836

The mode of dealing with this very important question, whether by dispatching a confidential agent to Dost Muhammad of Kabul merely to watch the progress of events, or to enter into relations with this chief, either of a political, or merely, in the first instance, of a commercial character, we confide to your discretion, as well as the adoption of any other measures that may appear to you desirable in order to counteract Russian advances in that quarter, should you be satisfied from the information received from your own agents on the frontier, or hereafter from Mr. McNeill, on his arrival in Persia, that the time has arrived at which it would be right for you to interfere decidedly in the affairs of Afghanistan.

Such an interference would doubtless be requisite, either to prevent the extension of Persian dominion in that quarter or to raise a timely barrier against the impending encroachments of Russian influence.

The immediate consequence was the dispatch of Alexander Burnes on an ostensibly commercial mission to Kabul, but really to talk politics.[1] He arrived in Kabul in September 1837, and two months later the famous siege of Herat by the Persians began. Matters thus reached a crisis, and a decision of policy was imperative. Dost Muhammad must be aided against the Perso-Russian menace, or another set up in his stead, or Afghanistan left to its fate. Dost Muhammad was at first eager for an alliance. But his price was the recovery of Peshawar from Ranjit Singh, whose loss in 1834 had just been confirmed by the bloody battle of Jamrud. Auckland rightly refused to desert a profitable Sikh alliance for a doubtful Afghan one. But he also refused to exercise any influence with Ranjit Singh for a diplomatic arrangement which would have saved the face of both parties. Burnes in consequence had nothing to offer Dost Muhammad who now turned to the Russians as his only other resource.

Auckland, assuming that Afghan overtures to Russia automatically involved Afghan hostility to British India, proceeded to the second stage of his policy. His minute of 12 May 1838 defined three possible courses.[2]

The first to confine our defensive measures to the line of the Indus, and to leave Afghanistan to its fate; the second to attempt to save Afghanistan by granting succour to the existing chiefships of Caubul and Candahar; the third to permit or to encourage the advance of Ranjit Singh's armies upon Caubul, under counsel and restriction, and as subsidiary to his advance to organise an expedition headed by Shah Shooja, such as I have above explained.

If Auckland had adopted the first alternative, which he thought 'would be absolute defeat', no ill would have happened as events very shortly proved. If he had chosen the second the result would have been the same. If the third had been persevered in the result would have been similar, because Ranjit Singh had no real intention of committing his forces to the bleak Afghan plateau, particularly in someone else's cause. His choice of the third course was not disastrous in itself but

[1] It was Burnes's correspondence at this time which was garbled in the interests of Auckland's government in the Blue Book of 1843.

[2] J. W. Kaye, *History of the War in Afghanistan*, vol. i, p. 320.

led to disastrous consequences. First it involved Auckland in a battle of wits as to who should do the military work, a contest which revealed the depth of his diplomatic incompetence and dependence on the views of his political advisers, particularly Sir William Macnaghten. The result of the contest was the Tripartite Treaty of June 1838. The object of the treaty was to restore Shah Shuja to the *masnad* of Kabul. Ranjit Singh was confirmed in all his dominions and was to send Muslim troops to Kabul if called upon by the Shah. Similarly the Shah would assist the Sikhs if required. Sind was to be free 'for ever' from Afghan rule. In other words Shah Shuja was to have Kabul at the price of Sind with Sikh military and British financial support. Auckland was still uncommitted to military action.[1] But Ranjit's success consisted in the fact that he was not committed to military action with the British, but only with the resourceless exile Shah Shuja. He had only to sit still in order to force the British to act themselves or see the whole enterprise collapse. Ranjit Singh had outwitted Auckland. He sat still. Auckland now took the next of his fatal steps. It was determined in Simla that the British should do the work and this decision was justified in a dispatch to the directors dated 13 August 1838.

Before the final plunge Auckland was given one more opportunity of withdrawing in time. The London cabinet had protested direct to Persia and followed this up by the occupation of Karak. On the news of this action the Shah raised the siege of Herat, whose defence had been inspired by the courage and skill of Eldred Pottinger, in August 1838. But though doubts had been expressed at home, and the Duke of Wellington said that advance into Afghanistan would mean 'a perennial march into that country', Auckland persisted. His manifesto announcing the invasion was published on 1 October, before he knew that Herat was safe. But on 8 November he announced both the raising of the siege and perseverance in the plan.

We can now summarize Auckland's errors which led to an aggressive and dangerous war without even the justification of necessity. He first overlooked the fact that Afghan love of independence was even greater than their love of turbulence, and was thus the most effective of all safeguards against Russian domination. His ignorance of Middle Eastern conditions might excuse him on this score, but could not absolve him from responsibility for the others. The next mistake was his failure to put pressure on Ranjit Singh to come to terms with Dost Muhammad over Peshawar. Then followed the decision to replace the exile of thirty years' standing, Shah Shuja, who shared James I's reputation of never saying a foolish thing and never doing a wise one, on the throne of Kabul. Next came the virtual release of Ranjit Singh from a major part in the work by the terms of the Tripartite Treaty. From this flowed the decision that the British should undertake the main burden themselves and the final step of persevering in the project

[1] In itself the Tripartite Treaty was only 'a new and enlarged version of that made between Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja in 1833'. *Camb. History of India*, vol. i, p. 495.

when all reason for it had vanished with the saving of Herat. Auckland saw himself as a diplomatic potter moulding the political clay of Afghanistan; but he was in fact the clay and his political advisers the potters.

The iron of war now succeeded the gentler movements of diplomatic pens and it only remains to record the first deceptive success, the later disaster, and the final recovery. The army of the Indus was formed during the summer of 1838. It moved forward in December 1838, 21,000 strong including Shah Shuja's contingent of 6,000. At first all went well. Kandahar was taken in April 1839, Ghazni stormed in July, and Kabul entered in August. Dost Muhammad was a fugitive. But then the difficulties began. Shah Shuja proved unpopular and unable to win sufficient adherents to hold the country. In consequence the Bengal troops under General Cotton had to remain as auxiliaries. In fact they became an occupying force and a kind of double Afghan and British government resulted. Shah Shuja could only maintain himself at the price of foreign and infidel aid and this rendered an already unpopular régime an odious one. The result was a state of permanent unrest and sporadic revolt. Such a situation could only have one ending. In 1840 a revolt of the Ghilzais was suppressed and in November Dost Muhammad himself surrendered. But the country remained disturbed and the occupation costs steadily mounted.[1] The home government ordered retrenchment and this was unwisely effected at the expense of the stipends to Afghan chiefs. The Ghilzais rose again and interrupted communications with Peshawar. On 2 November 1841 a concerted revolt began with the murder of Burnes in Kabul city. Then began the oft-told tale of ineptitude and irresolution which converted defeat into disaster and tragedy. The commanding general Elphinstone was infirm and imbecile (his appointment in spite of his own protests was another of Auckland's mistakes); the political agent Macnaghten resolute but too confident of the power of money and diplomacy in such a crisis; the troops disheartened and exposed in the open cantonments instead of being esconced in the citadel of the Bala Hissar. Macnaghten was murdered in conference by Akbar Khan; on 2 January 1842 a treaty of evacuation was signed. On 6 January 16,000 men marched out of the cantonments and on the 13th Dr. Brydon reached Jalalabad as the only survivor. The rest had fallen to the Ghilzais and the rigours of the Afghan winter. In April 1842 the ever-luckless Shah Shuja was murdered by a nephew.

Such a disaster had never previously befallen a British-Indian army. But though Auckland was at first dismayed and despairing the disaster was not in fact complete. Kandahar, Ghazni, and Jalalabad were still in British hands and the Sikh alliance, in spite of the death of Ranjit Singh two year: earlier, held good in a passive way. At this juncture Lord Ellenborough, who had been actually appointed Governor-General the previous November, arrived in February 1842. It was

[1] They were reckoned to amount to at least £1,250,000 a year.

clear that Afghanistan would have to be evacuated. The only question was how this could be done with the least damage to British prestige both within and without India. Ellenborough's moves were erratic. He first proposed to evacuate the country after inflicting 'some signal and decisive blow' on the Afghans. The news of the fall of Ghazni so shook him that he ordered evacuation forthwith. But Generals Nott at Kandahar and Pollock who had reached Jalalabad from Peshawar stood their ground, pleading lack of transport. Ellenborough realized that he had made a mistake, but strove to conceal it beneath sonorous phrases. In July 1842 he repeated the order but in a note allowed Nott at Kandahar to 'retreat', if he considered it feasible, by way of Kabul and the Khyber instead of the Bolan, while Pollock at Jalalabad was allowed to co-operate with him. The onus of action was thus thrown upon the generals, and they asked for nothing more. General Pollock defeated Akbar Khan in two battles and took Kabul on 16 September. The next day he was joined there by General Nott who had marched from Kandahar by way of Ghazni. The European prisoners were rescued. The vindication of British Indian arms was only sullied by the blowing up of the great *bazar* of Kabul. On 12 October Kabul was evacuated and the army retired by way of the Khyber Pass. With them they took by express desire of Lord Ellenborough the gates of Mahmud of Ghazni's tomb which were thought to be those which Mahmud had removed from the temple of Somnath in Gujarat in A.D. 1025. In fact they were of a common pattern and later date. With this brilliance and this anti-climax the first Afghan war ended. Dost Muhammad was now allowed to return to his country. He soon reasserted his authority and died in 1863, at the age of eighty, still in possession of power. The passivity of Russia during the first campaign and the later disasters showed how grossly the Muscovite menace had been miscalculated.

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CHAPTER 4

Sind and the Panjab

I. Sind

BECAUSE of its isolated position, Sind had, up to this time, played little part in the affairs of India as a whole. It was long a Mughul province, chiefly famous as containing (at Umarkot) the birthplace of Akbar. Its trade through the port of Tatta was restricted to the products of the Panjab and southern Afghanistan. For this reason the British, through the East India Company, had had little contact with the country; the prospects were not good enough. A factory was reopened at Tatta in 1758, but only to be closed again in 1775. The means rather than the will for trade was lacking. As the north-western region became more settled, interest in commercial possibilities revived and a mission to the new Talpura *amirs* was sent in 1799. But if the country was more settled the rulers were more suspicious than before and the mission came to an abrupt conclusion.

With the turn of the century political motives stimulated the Company's hitherto rather languid interest. The French bogey descended on the country. Henceforward the British had a double interest in Sind, as a possible seat of trade as conditions grew more settled, and as a counter in the power politics of the north-west. In 1809 Sind received one of Lord Minto's diplomatic missions whose fruit (after one envoy had been recalled for exceeding his instructions) was a treaty with the Amirs undertaking not to allow the French a foothold in the country. The treaty was renewed in 1820 with the proviso that no European or American settlements should be allowed. In 1825 a punitive expedition against the Khosas led to the visit of James Burnes[1] to Hyderabad. He published the first account of Sind in English, and from this time dated ideas of turning the Indus into a great highway of commerce. So great a river should not flow by unused, seems to have been the argument, though where the commerce was to come from, since most of its course ran through deserts, and the Panjab was still unirrigated, seems to have been less distinctly understood. Lord Ellenborough's easily kindled imagination took fire at the thought of the rolling waters of the Indus;[2] in 1831 Alexander Burnes journeyed up the river to offer to Ranjit Singh a gift of English cart-horses.[3] 'Alas',

[1] Brother of Alexander, the more famous Kabul envoy.

[2] Ellenborough was President of the Board of Control 1828–30 and urged Bentinck to undertake this mission.

[3] The cart-horses were regarded by Ranjit Singh with more curiosity than appreciation, being larger than any breed known in the Panjab, but unsuitable for riding. They died of overfeeding.

remarked a Sindi Sayyid, 'Sind has now gone since the English have seen the river', and so the event proved.

British interest in Sind having now been stimulated by a modicum of knowledge, the country became a plaything in the tripartite political manœuvres of the Sikhs, the British, and the Afghans. The Amirs were deeply suspicious of all three, but they were helpless against any of them separately and could only hope to play one off against the others. The immediate danger came from Ranjit, who proposed the partition of the country to Bentinck at Rupar. That pacific statesman declined and the British thus became the virtual protectors of the Amirs from the Sikhs from 1831 to 1838. The outcome of Ranjit's proposal was the treaty of 1832, negotiated by Colonel Henry Pottinger, the first resident. By this treaty the Indus was thrown open to commerce with the proviso that no armed vessels or military stores should pass through.[1] The fears of the Amirs were expressed and soothed in the article which ran, 'the two contracting parties bind themselves never to look with the eye of covetousness upon the possessions of each other'. The essential case against later British policy in Sind rests in the first place on the unilateral violation of this treaty by the British.

So matters rested until 1838. When Lord Auckland decided that the British must bear the burden of restoring Shah Shuja to his throne the only possible route (the Panjab being ruled out by the presence of the Sikhs) lay through Sind and the Bolan pass. The treaty of 1832 was therefore brushed aside and in addition the Amirs were commanded to pay arrears of tribute to Shah Shuja though they held covenants issued by the Shah himself in 1833 releasing them from all further claims. Further, a new treaty was dictated in 1839 (and later revised in favour of the British) compelling them to pay 3 *lakhs* a year for a subsidiary force. They were told that 'neither the ready power to crush and annihilate them nor the will to call it into action were wanting, if it appeared requisite however remotely for the safety and integrity of the Anglo-Indian empire or frontier'. This was perhaps the least excusable of all Auckland's dubious actions at this time; to such depths can a weak man (in moral scruple as in will power) be driven in the effort to conceal the effect of earlier misjudgements. Sind thus became the military base for the campaign against Dost Muhammad.

Reparation could still have been made by withdrawal from the country at the conclusion of the Afghan 'incident'. But the incident ended in disaster. Further, an Amurath to Amurath succeeded in Ellenborough's succession to Auckland. The victories of Nott and Pollock were after all but the parting shots in a disastrous adventure. Ellenborough thirsted for some glory more positive than the subdued credit of a victorious retreat. There therefore followed the final episode of the annexation. On the excuse that the Amirs had shown themselves unfriendly during the Afghan affair (how could they have been anything else?) it was proposed to retain at least Karachi (occupied in

[1] Tariffs were settled by a supplementary treaty in 1834.

1839), Sukkur, and Bukkur. Before James Outram, the resident at Hyderabad and a man of the highest character, could arrange this, he was superseded by Sir Charles Napier, who was given supreme military and political control, in September 1842. This eccentric swashbuckler possessed as few scruples as Auckland but had at least the honesty to avow it. 'We have no right to seize Sind', he wrote in his diary, 'yet we shall do so and a very advantageous, useful, humane piece of rascality it will be.' New terms were presented to the Amirs, involving the cession of territory, the provision of fuel for steamers on the Indus, and the loss of coinage rights. Napier then acted as though the Amirs intended to reject the terms, seized the land demanded and razed the desert fortress of Imamgarh. The Amirs eventually signed at Outram's persuasion while absolving themselves of the consequences. A tumultuous attack on the Hyderabad residency gave Napier his cue; the Amirs were duly defeated at Miani in February 1843; they were then exiled and Sind annexed.[1] Napier remained four years to govern the country in rude but vigorous fashion. Outram returned to raise his voice in England against the policy but though he found support from the directors, it was too late to undo the past. It only remained to atone, by the administration of Sind, for the manner of its taking.

The whole Sind incident is one of the least creditable episodes in British history during the nineteenth century. There was the unblushing violation of the 1832 treaty; there were the dictated terms of the succeeding years under a naked show of force, and there was the cynical provocation of the final struggle. In more recent times these actions would have been labelled 'fascist', and in this case the newer title would have been more accurate than the old. But an appreciation of this public injustice should not blind us to the larger issues involved. Sind, like the rest of India, was fated by the current of the time to come under the transforming influence of the West. The process might have occurred spontaneously from within, as in the case of Turkey or Siam, or through protection, as in the case of the Indian states, or through annexation. The imbecility of the Amirs ruled out the first of these alternatives. The cynicism of Auckland and Napier presented the third in its most objectionable form. The issue was not whether western influence should penetrate Sind, but how it should do so; we can deplore the manner of its imposition while recognizing that Sind could not for ever remain isolated from the world, and that it was not in her own best interests that she should do so.

II. The Panjab

The rise of the Sikh movement, its entry into politics, and conversion into a military sect has been described in earlier pages in this book.[2] At the end of Aurangzeb's reign it seemed that Sikhism was dead as a military menace to the Mughuls. The tenth Guru, Gobind, died in

[1] The Mir of Khairpur alone escaped.
[2] *The Oxford History of India*, Part II, pp. 431–3.

1708. But his sons had been killed in battle and he named no spiritual successor. His follower Banda prolonged the struggle until 1715 when he was captured and executed and the revolt finally suppressed with great severity by Abdul Samad Khan. His surviving followers escaped to the hills where they lurked for a generation. Numerous small hill-forts in the foothills of the Himalayas from the Jumna to the Ravi attest to their outlaw existence during this period.

The Sikhs, it was thought, had been hammered out of existence. But the hammering did not in fact reduce them to pulp, but hardened a remnant to tempered steel. It is worth noting the transformation which this 'crisis experience' produced in the Sikh community. In one aspect the Sikh transformation was the well-known one of the metamorphosis of peaceful *panths* or sects into bands of armed ascetics. But in the case of the Sikhs it was more than this, for not only the ascetic *Akalis* went armed, but the whole community. Guru Gobind retained the old theology but altered the whole genius of the Sikh body. From a religious movement it became a separate religion, from a sect a distinct community and from a passive religious group a dynamic socio-political movement. Thus the worship of the one God and the disavowal of caste remained; the Muslim practice of meat eating was even added at this time. But a series of innovations strengthened the sense of brotherhood within, of separateness without, and above all, the sense of mission. The initiation ceremony encouraged new entrants and marked off the Sikhs from others; the greeting 'Hail Guru', the leaving of the hair unshaven, the title of Singh (lion or champion) encouraged the sense of separateness; the five '*K*s' provided as it were talismen of unity which appealed to high and low alike.[1] With the death of Guru Gobind political power passed to the *Khalsa* or whole congregation of the Sikhs, and spiritual authority to the Sikh scripture or *Granth Sahib*. This work now took the place of the Guru as God's representative among men and as such was the only object entitled to worship. Though the Sikhs as a body had now become permanently anti-Muslim in sentiment, it is interesting to notice the extent to which they borrowed from Islam even while they were striving against it. The emphasis on the unity of the Godhead, the repudiation of idolatry, and the disavowal of caste were loans taken before the breach with the Mughuls. But the custom of meat eating and the various devices to increase the sense of brotherhood were all added in the midst of the conflict. And may we not see in the title of 'Singh' the emphasis on struggle, and in the concept of martyrdom the influence of the Muslim doctrine of *jehad* or holy war?

The remnant which survived in the Panjab hills was thus a body which, though apparently leaderless as well as stateless, was held together by a body of doctrine which made them look upon themselves

[1] The five '*K*s' were *kesh*, unshorn hair and beard; *kungha*, carrying a comb in the hair; *kuchcha*, the wearing of shorts; *kara*, the wearing of a steel bangle on the right wrist; *kirpan*, carrying a sword. See K. Singh, *The Sikhs*, pp. 29–32.

as a Chosen People and by a ritual of daily life which underlined their separateness both to themselves and to others. Nothing was heard of them in the plains until Nādir Shah's march to Delhi in 1738–9. From that time the loosening of authority in the Panjab encouraged Sikh groups to reappear in the plains. The troubles of the fifties were their opportunity and after Panipat in 1761 there was virtually no one to oppose them. Their advance was thus rapid but disorderly. No strong chief existed to check them, but no accepted leader directed their movements. They spread over the Panjab as a number of war bands gaining converts and recruits as they proceeded and gradually forming into a number of embryo states. In the next thirty years the Sikh body was grouped into twelve loosely knit tribes or *misls*, each named after a leader or some local peculiarity, and predominantly Jat by race. The only outward link was an annual assembly or *Sarbat Khalsa* held at Amritsar, and an annual meeting of chiefs at *Gurumatta* which fell into abeyance after 1773 and last met in 1805. In this desultory and roving manner the Sikhs spread as far south as Karkhauda, twenty miles from Delhi, and as far north as the Indus.

The time was now ripe for crystallization into political unity. The need produced the man. Lahore was first occupied by the Sikhs in 1764, but their tenure was subject to periodical interference. The Patiala state was founded by Amar Singh in 1767 and became the chief Sikh power to the east of the Sutlej. In 1792 Ranjit Singh succeeded to the headship of the *Shukerchakia misl* at the age of twelve. Only a youth of exceptional ability could hold his place for long in such tumultuous times. In this respect Ranjit bears comparison with Akbar, who succeeded his father Humayun at the age of thirteen. His great chance came on Shah Zaman's last visit to the Panjab in 1798. On his retirement in 1799 he confirmed Ranjit in the possession of Lahore, thus casting the halo of legitimacy over what was already his in fact. Though superfluous in a material sense, such a title was of great value in terms of prestige. Ranjit could pose as the legitimate ruler to Muslims and as the favoured of the leading power in the region to his own Sikhs. Henceforward his progress was rapid. In 1801 he defeated the most powerful of the Sikh *misls*, the Bhangis. In 1802 Amritsar was his and he thus controlled, as it were, both the London and the Canterbury of the Sikh nation. In 1806 he took Ludhiana, but his further progress eastwards and southwards was then stopped by the British. Metcalfe's mission and the treaty of Amritsar in 1809 which followed marked a crisis in Ranjit's career, and his manner of dealing with it confirmed both his judgement and foresight. He realized the power of the Company without the bitter experience of defeat, he extracted the utmost advantage from his sacrifice of Cis-Sutlej claims, and he used the occasion to fasten discipline upon his brave but unruly followers. The visit of Holkar to Lahore as a fugitive in 1805 marked the beginning of the disciplined Sikh army; the ease with which Metcalfe's sepoy bodyguard repulsed an *Akali* attack enabled Ranjit

to impress on his followers the value of discipline and so to extend it. In 1818–19 he took Multan to the south-west and Kashmir to the north; in 1833 Ladakh was added and in 1834 Peshawar. Farther advance southwards, at the expense of the Amirs of Sind, was prevented by the British and westwards into Afghanistan by Dost Muhammad. But Peshawar was held in 1837 against the Dost's counter-attack. When Ranjit died at the age of fifty-nine in 1839 he was the undisputed master of a compact and well-knit kingdom possessing the only army in India capable of meeting the Company's forces on equal terms.

Ranjit with Ram Mohan Roy were the most remarkable Indians of their generation.

Here are two contemporary descriptions; the first by Charles Masson,[1] who visited Ranjit in the eighteen-twenties, and the second by W. G. Osborne,[2] who saw him in 1838.

In person, the Maharajah is a little below the middle size, and very meagre. His complexion is fair, and his features regular, with an aquiline nose. He carries a long white beard, and wants the left eye. Though apparently advanced in years, I believe he has not completed fifty. On the right side of his neck a large scar is visible, probably the effect of a wound. In his diet he is represented to be abstemious, but he has always been perniciously prone to copious cups of the strongest spirits, which, with his unbounded sensuality, has brought on him premature old age, with a serious burthen of infirmities: for some ailment, he makes daily use of laudanum. Simple in his dress, which is of white linen, he wears on his arm the celebrated diamond Koh-i-Nūr, of which he deprived Shah Sujah ul Mulk.

Ill-looking as he undoubtedly is, the countenance of Runjeet Singh cannot fail to strike everyone as that of a very extraordinary man; and though at first his appearance gives rise to a disagreeable feeling almost amounting to disgust, a second look shows so much intelligence, and the restless wandering of his single fiery eye excites so much interest, that you get accustomed to his plainess, and are forced to confess that there is no common degree of intellect and acuteness developed in his countenance, however odd and repulsive its first appearance may be.

His height is rather below the usual stature of the Sikhs, and an habitual stoop causes him to look shorter than he really is. He is by no means firm on his legs when he attempts to walk, but all weakness disappears when he is once on horseback. He has still a slight hesitation of speech, the consequence of a paralytic stroke about three years ago; but those about him assert that his health is much improved within the last twelvemonth. His long white beard and moustachoes give him a more venerable appearance than his actual age would lead you to expect; and at fifty-eight years of age he is still a hale and hearty old man, though an imaginary invalid. . . .

It is hardly possible to give an idea of the ceaseless rapidity with which his questions flow, or the infinite variety of subjects they embrace. 'Do you drink wine? How much? Did you taste the wine I sent you yesterday? How much

[1] C. Masson, *Narrative ... in Baluchistan, Afghanistan and the Panjab*, vol. i, p. 443.

[2] W. G. Osborne, *The Court and Camp of Runjeet Singh*, pp. 81–83 and 79–80.

did you drink? What artillery have you brought with you? Have they got any shells? How many? Do you like riding on horseback? What country horses do you prefer? Are you in the army? Which do you like best, cavalry or infantry? Does Lord Auckland drink wine? How many glasses? Does he drink it in the morning? What is the strength of the Company's army? Are they well disciplined?

The Panjab state was neither a traditional Indian territorial state and monarchy, nor merely a dictatorship of one community over another. The Sikhs were as much the leading partners in the state as the Marathas were in Sindia's or Holkar's territories, but they were not communal dictators like the early dynasties of the Delhi sultans. There was an element of partnership with other communities, even if it was only subordinate partnership, and this included the Muslims as well as various kinds of Hindus. At the same time Ranjit did not claim the despotic sway of a traditional monarch over his own Sikhs. To the end, though taking the title of Maharaja, he claimed to be no more than the general of the Khalsa. He was, in some sense, its elected chief, and like Augustus Caesar, he was careful never to push his pretensions too far and always preferred the substance to the shadow of power. We can perhaps best describe the Sikh state as a communal régime with the lesser communities in the position of junior partners. They were subordinate, but they were not trampled on. As the régime grew more stable and time passed, there were glimmerings of a nascent Panjabi nationalism. This faded away in the troubles of the eighteen-forties, to make an equally abortive appearance in the first half of the next century. Too much depended on one man for such feelings to take firm root in the time available.

It is clear that the first pillar of the Lahore state was Ranjit Singh himself. To an average military skill he united a diplomatic guile which even the tangled politics of the time rarely produced. But it was the presence of other qualities as well which made him such an outstanding figure. He had an Elizabethan faculty for bemusing both friends and foes as to his real intentions. Very shrewd in his assessment of character, he knew whom to trust and when and how far. He was able to make all hopes and fears revolve round himself; he never allowed any one man a position of dominating power, nor drove anyone to acts of desperation or despair. He balanced individuals and communities against each other with uncanny skill. Muslims, Dogras, Brahmans, and Europeans were used to set off his Sikhs, and his new army, composed of all these, was devoted personally to himself. In consequence each leader reckoned that he had as much to lose as to gain by his disappearance. He walked secure in a court of ambitious and ruthless men and no one dared to touch him even when he lay helpless and speechless with paralysis. He dominated his contemporaries by intellect as well as by craft. The activity of his mind showed itself, as in the case of Akbar, in an immense curiosity. 'His conversation is like a nightmare', wrote Victor Jacquement about 1830. 'He is almost the first

inquisitive Indian I have seen; and his curiosity balances the apathy of the whole of his nation. He asked a hundred thousand questions of me, about India, the British, Europe, Bonaparte, the world in general and the next, hell, paradise, the soul, God, the devil and a myriad of others of the same kind.'[1]

The next pillar of the state, which gave to it its remarkable stability during Ranjit Singh's life, was the principle of integration. The dominance of the ruling race was sweetened, as in the case of Akbar, by the co-operation of other communities. The principle of religious toleration was observed and the avenue to honour and confidence was open to all. The Fakir Aziz-ud-din was one of Ranjit's most trusted confidential advisers; Brahmans and Dogras with other Hindus, and Europeans[2] were high in his confidence. Unlike contemporary Afghanistan, there was no permanent state of sporadic rebellion. The rivalries were personal and they were pursued within the orbit of a struggle for the leader's favour.

The third and most obvious pillar (after the personality of Ranjit Singh himself) was the army. At the end of his reign the armed forces directly controlled by Ranjit totalled about 75,000 men, and there were in addition the contingents of dependent chiefs, such as the Dogras of the hills. More than half of this number constituted the *fauj-i-ain* or regular army, which was organized on the European plan, and indeed included many Europeans in its officer cadre. The infantry owed much to the Italian General Ventura and consisted of both Sikhs and Panjabi Muslims. The cavalry, 12,000 strong, was organized by the French General Allard. It was said to be less efficient than the infantry, but was a capable and effective force. The glory of the Sikh regular army was the artillery, first organized by the French General Court and Colonel Gardner. Both the infantry and the artillery were unrivalled for steadiness; if the former was the equal of its British-Indian counterpart the latter was probably superior. These forces constituted the material strength of the Sikh power and as long as they held together and were capably led, they had no superior in the sub-continent.

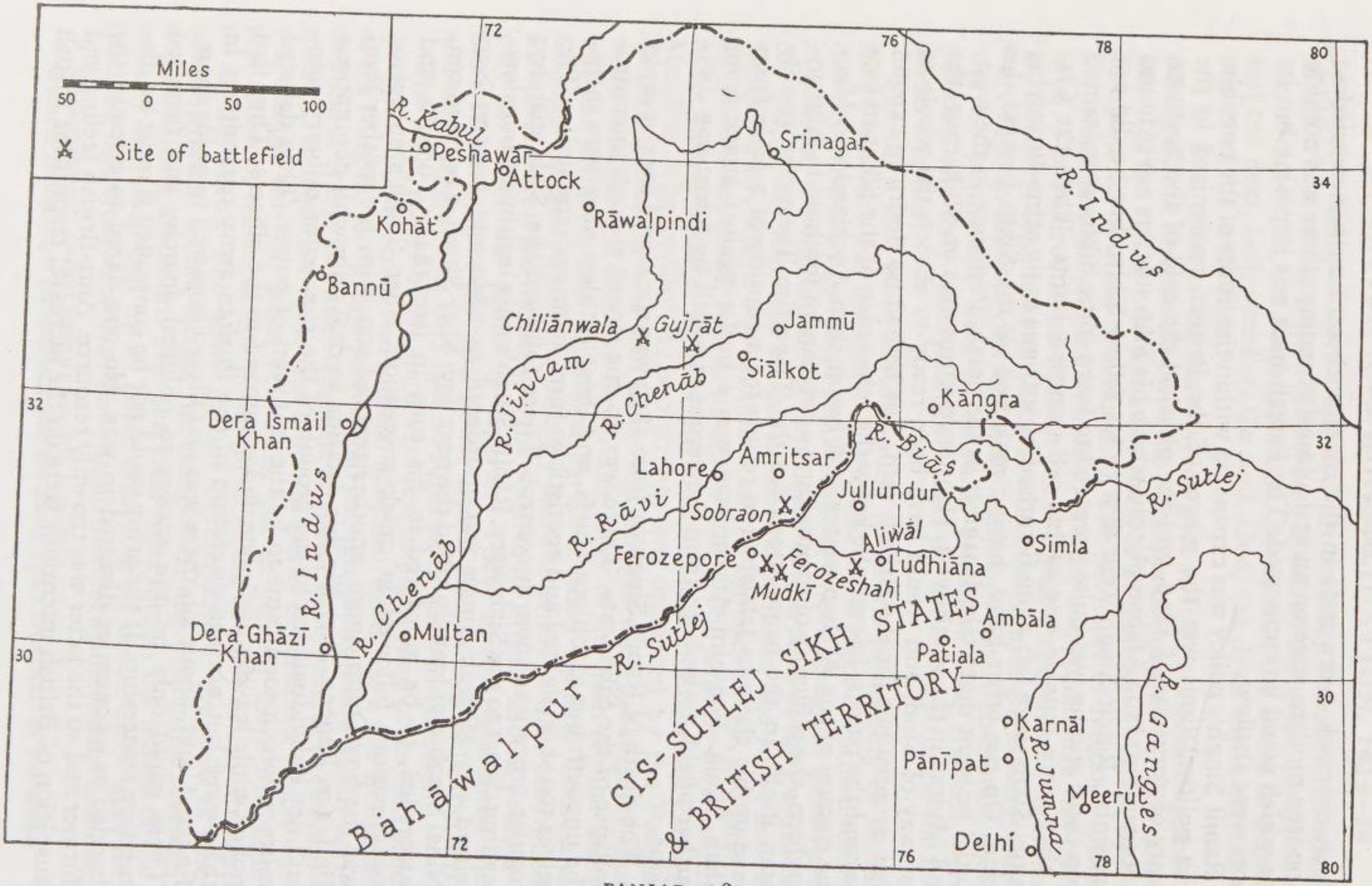
The other pillars of the state were less imposing and of less intrinsic strength. The revenue and judicial administration was a fair imitation of the Mughul model and served well enough in an almost wholly agricultural country. But there was little attention to commerce or development. It is true that there was a public works department which was responsible for 300 miles of canals, but in general there was little realization of the economic possibilities of the country or any attempt to exploit them. The army in fact overshadowed the rest of the administration, monopolizing the manpower, engrossing the revenue, and canalizing ambition. The best men went into it, the wealth of the country was absorbed by it. After satisfying its needs there were no funds for constructive works. The Panjab therefore suffered the nemesis

[1] V. Jacquement, *Letters from India*, vol. i, p. 395.
[2] General Avitabile, a Neapolitan, was for many years Governor of Peshawar.

which overtook every state in the nineteenth century which tried to support a modern state on an agricultural economy; there was nothing else which could be supported. The Panjab state was imposing but its roots were shallow.

Ranjit Singh's policy was expansion within the limits of the possible. The political limit was the power of the British, recognized in the treaty of Amritsar of 1809, and the physical the cold of the northern mountains and the Afghan plateau which his Sikh soldiers never found congenial. Ranjit Singh went first to his fellow Sikhs, but he did not stop there and he was quite prepared to leave some Sikhs unredeemed if they were outside one of his self-imposed limits. Thus the Cis-Sutlej Sikhs were left as undisturbed by intrigue as by arms during his reign. On the other hand, having mastered all the Sikhs beyond the Sutlej he went on to take Kashmir in the north, Peshawar in the west, and Multan in the south-west. He cast covetous eyes on Shikarpur, the gateway of Sind, and would have been ready to absorb the whole of that country but for the British veto. But he had no desire to expand beyond the passes, because he knew the reluctance of the Sikhs to face the rigours of the Afghan winter and, better than Auckland and Macnaghten, the difficulty of maintaining a permanent foothold in Afghanistan itself. In the negotiations for the Tripartite Treaty he readily gave up his claim to Jalalabad in return for a subsidy of 2 *lakhs* from Shah Shuja. For him Afghanistan was a buffer against attack from farther afield, to be kept from dangerous strength by fomenting divisions.

The death of Ranjit Singh in June 1839 was the signal for the rapid collapse of the Sikh state. There was no one strong enough to control the uncouth but ambitious chiefs, and those ruthless men were themselves too shortsighted and egotistic to form an aristocratic union. The regular army was soon in control. There followed the Sikh anarchy, leading direct to the Sikh wars. Ranjit Singh's only legitimate but slow-witted son Kharak Singh was murdered in 1840 and his son Nao Nihal Singh accidentally killed the next day. Sher Singh, a reputed son, succeeded, to be murdered in his turn in late 1843. Tumults and assassinations followed in quick succession. Sher Singh's successor was the boy Dulip Singh, another reputed son, with his mother Rani Jindan as Regent. Sher Singh's decision to deal only with deputations and not individuals led to the growth of the *punches* or military committees, which soon came to be the real seats of power. They debated policy while leaving discipline and command to the officers. They had the power but not the discretion of the Puritan army committees in England, and, above all, there was no Oliver Cromwell to guide them. There could only be one answer to political anarchy and factional military leadership. If the army could not be controlled it must be disbanded or its energies diverted in war. No one dared to attempt the former and so the latter was the only resource. Anti-British feeling and suspicion of British intentions were on the increase; respect for British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R. Rāvi
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Aliwāl
Simla
Ferozepore
Ferozeshah
Mudkī
Ludhiāna
Ambāla
Dera Ghāzī Khan
Multan
Patiala
CIS-SUTLEJ SIKH STATES
& BRITISH TERRITORY
Karnāl
Pānīpat
R. Jumna
R. Ganges
Meerut
Delhi
Bahāwalpur

PANJAB, 1839

military power had received a blow in the Afghan war, and there were a number of minor disputes. The army was therefore willing to move but it was the desire to be rid of the military menace which induced the Regent Rani Jindan, Lal Singh the Wazir, and Teja Singh the commander-in-chief to countenance the move. It was the same motive which accounted for the irresolution with which the war was waged.

On the British side the danger of war had long been apparent as the crisis in the Panjab grew chronic and steadily deeper. The desire to secure his rear in the event of war had weighed with Ellenborough in overthrowing Sindia's army in 1843. Auckland, Ellenborough, and Hardinge had all increased the forces between Meerut and the Sutlej, until they reached a total of 40,000 men and 94 guns. Since the disciplined Sikh forces now numbered about 60,000 with several hundred guns, this cannot be considered provocative. Like many unsteady regimes, the Sikh government had the choice of war or internal turmoil and it chose war.

The Sikh army crossed the Sutlej on 11 December 1845. It was a soldier's war, brief and bloody. In the two battles of Mudki and Firozshah the Sikh thrust on Firozpur was driven back; a dash towards Ludhiana was thrown back at Aliwal and the Sikh army was finally broken up at Sobraon on 10 February 1846. There was little generalship on either side. Mutual distrust paralysed the Sikh command and on the British side the commander-in-chief, Sir Hugh Gough, preferred bull-headed frontal attacks to tactics and the use of artillery. The result was desperate fighting and severe battles. The military lessons of the war were the fighting value of the Sikh soldier which came as a revelation to many on the British side and the old Napoleonic lesson of the importance of artillery.

The Sikh state now lay prostrate and its disposal became a pressing problem. One solution was to annex the Panjab outright. But this would both have removed a hitherto useful buffer against aggression from the north-west and severely taxed British strength in holding down so large an area filled with a martial and disaffected people. The solution of a subsidiary force on the Maratha plan was rejected on the ground that it would probably lead to further conflict. In fact it might have enabled Mulraj's rebellion in 1848 to have been nipped in the bud and so saved much blood and treasure and perhaps some Panjabi autonomy. The actual solution was an attempt to revive the Sikh state in a more healthy form by pruning away its militarism and providing British guidance. By the treaty of Lahore of 9 March 1846, the Sikh army was limited to 20,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry. The Jallandhar *doab*, Kashmir, and its dependencies were ceded to the British and an indemnity of £500,000 sterling was exacted. The Maharaja's government was recognized and a British resident established in Lahore of advise it. The settlement was completed by the handing over to Kashmir to the Dogra chief of Jammu, Golab Singh, who had nicely calculated the precise moment for abandoning the cause to which he

owed all his fortune, for £1 million sterling. The effects of this ill-omened act have not yet ceased to operate.

The resident appointed under the treaty was Sir Henry Lawrence. On grounds of personality and sympathy with traditional chiefs no better choice could have been made. Yet his very zeal for reform was one of the factors which shattered his dream of re-creating the Sikh state on modern and humane lines. Sikh militarism was scotched, not destroyed; Sikh nationalism looked to a revival rather than regeneration from within and therefore regarded all reforms as so much western interference. At first matters went well. Within a year Lawrence was using Sikh troops to help crush a revolt in Kashmir. But at the end of 1846 the regency had to be replaced by a regency council of eight *sardars* with Lawrence himself as their president and the British garrisons were continued for another eight years. This was done at the request of friendly chiefs, but necessarily deepened the fissure between extremist patriots and those who were now regarded as fellow travellers with the foreigner. The very merits of Lawrence's vigorous rule strengthened the extremist party. In attacking such abuses as suttee, female infanticide, ferocious punishments, and vexatious taxes he was held to be attacking traditional life in general. The common people heard him gladly, but the *sardars* muttered in private and bided their time.

The departure of Lawrence on leave at the end of 1847 perhaps hastened but did not cause an outbreak which was as nearly as possible inevitable. But his absence may well have been responsible for converting what began as a local defiance in a distant stronghold into a national rising. In April 1848 Diwan Mulraj, the Governor of Multan, took up arms after two British officers, who had been sent to install his Sikh successor, had been murdered. Lord Dalhousie had only been three months in office and accepted General Gough's advice that punitive operations should be delayed till the autumn. Though young Herbert Edwardes attacked Mulraj with what local levies he could gather he could not assault the fortress or prevent the spread of the revolt. The crisis came in September when a large Sikh force sent by the resident and the Lahore Durbar under Sher Singh went over to Mulraj. A local and very natural rising had become a national revolt. Dalhousie then acted with the vigour he never afterwards lost. On 10 October he declared, 'unwarned by precedent, uninfluenced by example, the Sikh nation has called for war, and on my words, Sirs, they shall have it with a vengeance'.[1] Lord Gough was again in command and crossed the Ravi on 16 November. The two inconclusive and costly battles of Ramnagar and Chillianwalla[2] led up to the decisive battle of Gujarat.

[1] Vengeance is here used in the sense of the French 'à outrance', or 'to the limit', and not in the common sense of taking revenge.

[2] The losses on this occasion (2,446 casualities, 4 guns, and 3 colours) so stirred public feeling in London that Napier was sent out to replace Gough. Gough won Gujarat before Napier could arrive.

For once Gough made full use of his artillery; the Sikh army was shattered beyond hope of recovery and its remnant surrendered at discretion in March 1849.

The Panjab was now annexed outright by Dalhousie on his own responsibility.[1] He could get no clear lead from London, and while some authorities like Ellenborough and Henry Lawrence were against it, others like John Lawrence were in favour. The choice really lay between annexation and administration for a time on the Mysore model. Against this latter could be argued the fact that the Panjab was a frontier tract instead of lying deep within British territory; the same risks could not therefore be taken. A second national rising could not be risked. Dalhousie had no use for effete monarchies or oriental tradition; all that he knew of the old Sikh government he considered to be bad; for him annexation was a matter of common sense and common humanity. Opinion in general, then born along on the flowing tide of western self-confidence, was with him, and if efficient administration was to be taken as the sole criterion of government, the case was irresistible. But something is lost in corporate personality every time a nation loses its independence. The modern spirit had to come to the Panjab with all its material benefits and spiritual unrest. But if it had come by the free action of a reforming party within rather than by the compulsion of an alien rule, the conversion would have been more complete in the long run though it might have been slower in the beginning. Much that later happened in the Panjab might then have been avoided, including the division of India. The Sikhs by their own folly threw away the first chance of a Panjab organically integrated into a healthy plural society, Dalhousie by his over-confidence the second. Henry Lawrence had been too hasty with his reforms but his prescription was on the right lines.

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[1] Dulip Singh was pensioned. He later lived in England as a country gentleman.

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CHAPTER 5

Government and People: Organization of Power

WITH the conquest of the Panjab the shape of British India was virtually complete. The British were the masters of India from the Indus to the Bay of Bengal. We may now ask ourselves in what way they proposed to administer these vast territories. They had begun as the heirs of the moribund Mughul empire and continued as the legatees of the Maratha confederacy. They had begun to pride themselves on being the harbingers of western civilization to India, but for the present they believed that India must long remain dependent. How did they propose to govern the country in the interim? We have already traced the steps by which the Company was first supervised and then superseded by the Crown, and its commercial character gradually whittled away. It remains to consider the organization which gradually developed during this period, what the term Company Bahadur meant to the people at large.

We may first note the development of the central executive. Most empires in India began with a single controlling and conquering head who devolved power as he extended and established his dominion. Sometimes, as with the Maratha Peshwa, the agent of the leader became the effective ruler and devolution proceeded to the point of division and even dissolution. In the case of the British, authority began by being separate and only slowly became united. There were three presidencies each directly subordinate to the Company in London, and this state of affairs lasted until the Regulating Act of 1773. The Governor-General at Calcutta was then given a very general authority over the two presidencies. In 1783 this was extended to give him control over 'all such points as shall relate to any transaction with the country powers, or to war or peace, or to the application of the revenues or forces of such presidencies in time of war'. This was underlined by a provision of the Act of 1793 superseding the authority of a governor when a Governor-General visited one of the subordinate presidencies. Wellesley made use of this provision when preparing for the last Mysore war. From this time, therefore, there was a unified direction of major policy tempered only by the old privilege of the Governors of Madras and Bombay of corresponding directly with the home authorities. The freedom of Madras and Bombay shrank to that of a considerable degree of internal autonomy.

The Governor-General himself, as we have seen, became the effective master of his own house when the number of his councillors was

reduced to three by Pitt's India Act and the Act of 1786 gave him power to override his council. This power not only enabled him to dominate his council in person but also to act without it. The Governor-General could proceed up-country and send back decisions which the councillors could protest against but not reverse. In a country so vast, with communication so slow and a capital so distant from the frontiers, decisions were often necessary before all the necessary information could be conveyed to Calcutta and debated there. The system of government 'from the stirrup' as Ellenborough called it, was seen at its best when Lord Hastings directed the operations of the Pindari and last Maratha wars in person in 1817–18, and during Lord William Bentinck's great up-country tour of 1830–3. Its dangers in case of a susceptible or irresolute ruler were revealed during Lord Auckland's sojourn in Simla during 1838. The manifesto of 1 October 1838 announcing the Afghan expedition was issued without the knowledge of the councillors, who could only remonstrate at not having an opportunity of recording their views before its publication. So long as the Governor-General was supported by the President of the Board of Control, no power or person could resist him in India. Distance and the disinclination to force a crisis gave the Governor-General considerable freedom even from home control as the case of Lord Ellenborough showed. From the time of Cornwallis the Governor-General was the effective 'great Mughul' of India.

The Governor-General's internal authority increased with the expansion of the Bengal Presidency. After Tipu's fall the limits of the Madras Presidency were practically fixed. Bombay found its limit with the fall of the Peshwa in 1818 except for the addition of Sind in 1843. All the expansion north and westwards from Calcutta fell to the direct control of the Governor-General as did the control of the Rajput and central Indian states when they became dependent on the British. When we add Hyderabad to the list it will be seen that the control not only of external policy, but of the dependent states and the major portion of British Indian territory, fell directly to the Governor-General. His power of legislation, as of administration, was first limited to his own presidency. But the Charter Act of 1833 gave him, as 'Governor-General of India in Council' (no longer Governor-General of Fort William in Bengal) power to pass legislative Acts for the whole of British India with the sole extra help of a fourth or legislative member of council.[1] Cornwallis first received the power and Wellesley added the trappings of the Mughul. The popular instinct rightly saw in the Governor-General the supreme arbiter of Indian destiny.

The essential instruments of the Governor-General's will were the civil service and the army. Together they performed for the British raj the functions of Akbar's *mansabdars*. The *mansabdars* were in origin military officers some of whom exercised civil functions. It is significant

[1] He was not to be a member of the Company's service. The first of these members was Macaulay.

of the whole tenor of British administration that these two branches from the first were kept distinct and that there were constant protests against the practice of appointing military officers for civil duties. At first the civil officers were merely those of the Company's commercial factors who were detailed for revenue and other civil duties. The real start of the civil service was made by Cornwallis, when he separated the commercial and revenue branches of the administration, enforced the rules against receiving presents and carrying on private trade, and secured the payment of adequate salaries. At the same time he began the practice of excluding Indians from all high office.[1] This was given a legal basis in the Charter Act of 1793, which confined all posts worth more than £500 a year[2] to the covenanted servants of the Company. The Company's servants had been ill-paid, corrupt, and mixed up with commerce, while many responsible posts had been held by Indians. From this time the service was well-paid, honourable, and confined to administration, while Indians were not only excluded from the covenanted service, but also from all higher posts. The character of the service was broadly fixed for the rest of the Company's life.

The Company's servants became the best paid civil service in the world. With nothing more than their official emoluments they could live well and retire with a competence. But they never forgot that they had once lived better and could make fortunes. Hence arose the tension which lingered through the British period between civilians bewailing successive 'clippings' as the reward for faithful service and an English public critical of a pomp and extravagance which they believed had continued from the days of Clive and the 'nabobs'. The large-scale corruption of older days disappeared and the service soon attained a high standard of duty and probity. A kind of lesser corruption, which consisted in finding loopholes in the regulations and making money by clandestine presents, irregular allowances, fictitious sales, and the like, lingered on until Bentinck's day.[3] But as the young men who entered the service from the turn of the century rose to responsibility these things disappeared for good. The jobbery and corruption of a Potts, a Grand, or a Macpherson gave place to the industry and high-minded integrity of a Metcalfe, an Elphinstone, or a Lawrence. This was not only due to administrative reform or the stimulus and example of men like Cornwallis and Wellesley. It was also promoted by the Company's greater care in appointment. Though the system of nomination by directors continued, the process was less haphazard and the preparation for duty more studied. Wellesley forced the pace by founding his College of Fort William in 1801. The directors managed to quash this project but only at the price of establishing their own East India College at Haileybury. There cadets received a general education and some

[1] With the outstanding exception of Ali Ibrahim Khan, the Judge of Benares.
[2] About Rs. 500 a month at the rate of exchange then.
[3] An illustration of this was the Colebrooke case in Delhi. See T. G. P. Spear, *Twilight of the Mughuls*, pp. 167–81.

tincture of Eastern knowledge and left England both more mature and better prepared for their life work in India.

The last characteristics of the civil service were its family nature and its 'Englishness'. Its family character derived from the practice of nomination. The directors could no longer send impossible friends and relations because of the Haileybury bar. But they could still send friends and relations. This had both good and bad effects. A tradition of hereditary service grew up, which gave to India some of its most devoted foreign servants; on the other hand, the civil service tended to become a close corporation, possessive in its attitude and conservative in its outlook. Every Governor-General had to reckon with the senior Company's servant, convinced of the folly of all innovation. The 'Englishry' of the service derived from the fact that Indians were in practice excluded from it. Men like Purnea of Mysore, Nana Fadnavis of Poona, and Salar Jung of Hyderabad were admitted to combine great ability with integrity, but there was no avenue of employment for their kind in the Company's service. This was the result, not of a race but a patronage bar, because nominations were in the directors' hands. As things were, the only way to introduce Indians would have been to appoint some Indian directors. In 1833 the new liberal Parliament declared that 'no native . . . shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the Company'. But nomination remained for twenty years longer; when open competition replaced it in 1853 the examinations were held in Britain and it was not until 1864 that the first Indian entered the Indian civil service.[1] Where principle was unavailing against vested interest, however, the more mundane motives of convenience and economy found a way. Wellesley and Lord Hastings took the first steps towards promoting Indian agency, and Lord William Bentinck threw open to Indians three judicial grades up to the position of subordinate judge. This was the real beginning of the great Indian judicial tradition.

If the civil service was the right hand of the Governor-General, the army was his left. As in the case of the civil administration each presidency army was at first independent. In the early days a company of Europeans, a body of topasses, and a number of undisciplined peons sufficed. Their chief business was to grace processions to the Company's garden, to fire salutes whenever possible, to keep order in the settlement, including the young roystering factors, and to put on a brave show should a local potentate or Mughul magnate draw uncomfortably near. The real start of the Company's armies came during the Anglo-French wars when Stringer Lawrence embodied the Madras European Regiment[2] and raised a number of Indian companies. From that time the armies of the three presidencies developed independently. The Acts of 1773 and 1783 gave the Governor-General an overall

[1] He was Satyendra Nath Tagore.

[2] Later the 1st Madras Fusiliers. Clive had his first commission in this regiment.

control, but the armies remained separate till the Mutiny. But as the Bengal Presidency expanded, its army grew with it and came in time to overshadow the others by reason both of its numbers and the greater wealth of fighting material at its disposal.

In considering the British forces in India we must distinguish between the royal and Company troops. Royal regiments were first sent in particular crises to aid the Company and later were permanently stationed in the country. They were the most efficient and most reliable force in India, being remote from local feelings and controversies. They were a source of much jealousy since their officers enjoyed precedence over Company's officers of the same rank, and were fully conscious of their position. They were, in fact, the ultimate resource of the Governor-General and it was primarily to them that the restoration of authority was due in 1857–8.

The Company's armies consisted of both Europeans and Indians. The European branch was at first poor both in its officers and other ranks with a few shining exceptions. But it gradually improved in tone and efficiency to bear comparison with the royal regiments. At the close of the Mutiny it numbered 16,000 men. By far the larger proportion of the army consisted of the Sepoy regiments. In 1830 these numbered 187,000 and in 1857 200,000. The army, from early days, was officered by Europeans. By the reorganization of 1796 the European officers equalled in numbers those of the royal regiments. Since they had Indian company commanders as well, there was in fact a pool of officers available for other duties. At a time when the civil service had still barely taken shape and the Company's territories were rapidly expanding, there was a need for men of resource and ability outside the covenanted ranks. Hence arose the practice of seconding officers for civil and diplomatic dutics. Wellesley used as many as he could and the 'soldier-civilian' and 'soldier-political' became important elements in the Company's services. Civil work being well paid and offering chances of distinction was eagerly sought after. These men were the cause of much jealousy among the civilians, who regarded them as interlopers, and among their own brethren who looked on them as deserters in the pursuit of ambition. On the credit side it can be said that they provided a valuable link between the civil and military departments and introduced a useful element of flexibility; on the debit side was the fact that many of the best officers were thus drained away from the officer cadre. The occasional lapses of European military leadership were not wholly unconnected with this loss of good men. The officers of the Company's army, both European and Indian, were first recruited from the ranks of the Company's writers (like Clive), from foreign sources, and from royal regiments. They were a motley collection, inferior to the royal officers both in morale and technique. But as the army developed their quality improved to produce such leaders as Sir John Malcolm, Sir Thomas Munro, Generals Nott, Pollock, Sale, and Havelock. If they lacked, as a body, some of the

patriotic ardour of the king's troops, they yielded nothing in *esprit de corps* and professional skill. Their advantage over royal officers was knowledge of the country, their disadvantage a certain provincialism, and narrowing of their sense of the possible.

The Indian troops formed the bulk of the Company's army. The regular pay, the comparatively good conditions, and the prestige of the Company's name made it easy to raise troops. The general success of the Company's arms and the care taken to defer to local custom retained their loyalty and fed their pride. The Company's Indian troops were undoubtedly the most efficient army in India and probably in all Asia[1] in the early nineteenth century. Only the Sikhs ran them close. At the same time it remained a fact that they were a collection of mercenaries. The men were loyal to their salt, and usually proud of their leaders. But fighting was for them a professional matter and they had no spark of supra-regimental or national pride. All hopes of high promotion were denied them and between them and their leaders a great cultural gulf was fixed. Since they could not identify themselves with the régime by helping to control it, they tended to express their feelings of self-respect or *izzat* by a fanatical devotion to traditional customs. Hence developed a certain brittle quality in the Indian troops. They were brave and steadfast in battle, loyal and well behaved in the camp, but they were liable to see in small changes and unconsidered actions insults to their customs or subtle plots against their deepest feelings. Loyalty was therefore always conditional and as the wind of innovation grew stronger from the West it became more difficult to maintain those conditions. Thus the career of victory of the Company's forces were chilled by an undercurrent of mutiny such as those of Vellore in 1806 and of Barrackpore in 1824. These were more serious than the parallel 'white mutinies' of the Company's Europeans, because of the numbers involved and the intimate connexion of the troops with the country. The Company's Indian troops were a sharp and shining sword for the Governor-General, but also a two-edged one.

The armed forces were completed by a number of irregular corps, raised to keep pace with the expansion of the British territories. One of the first of these was Skinner's Horse. Others were the Gurkha battalions raised after the Gurkha wars, and the Panjab Frontier Force with the famous Corps of Guides.

Subsidiary to the army was the police. In Mughul times local security was the responsibility of the village community through its headman and the effective district police were the local governor's military forces. The British subdivided the army into soldiers and police as they had formerly subdivided the imperial service into civil and military. The police system really began with Cornwallis. He appointed a superintendent of police for Calcutta in 1791 and extended this system to the districts in the next year. A *daroga* or superintendent was allotted to each district and the *zamindars* were relieved of their police

[1] Counting Russia as in Europe.

duties. The hereditary village police became *chokidars* or watchmen and the village authorities incidentally lost much of their prestige. The new police increased the authority of the central government by providing a force under its direct control in every part of its possessions. But they also increased its unpopularity by their oppressions and exactions. They were badly paid and used their extensive powers to recoup themselves both in cash and self-esteem. They were loyal and effective up to a point, but they were corrupt and heavy handed.

As for the police [wrote Bentinck][1] so far from being a protection to the people, I cannot better illustrate the public feeling regarding it, than by the following fact, that nothing can exceed the popularity of a recent regulation by which, if a robbery has been committed, the Police are *prevented* from making any enquiry into it, except upon the requisition of the persons robbed: that is to say, the shepherd is a more ravenous beast of prey than the wolf.

The Governor-General had his army to protect (and enlarge) the state, his police to maintain order, and his civil officers to collect revenue and administer affairs. He had also to dispense justice to the people. He had to consider both the kind of justice which ought to be dispensed and also the machinery for its administration. In Mughul times each community enjoyed its own personal law, which was administered according to its own customs. Revenue questions were settled by revenue officers. For criminal law the Islamic code was enforced on all, and administered through *Qazis* appointed by the emperor and governors. This was tempered by the right of the rulers, jealously guarded by the Mughuls, and exercised by Alivardi Khan, to do justice themselves. At first the Company continued this policy, allowing the Nazim of Bengal (or his deputy, for many years Muhammad Reza Khan) to superintend the courts. Then came the irruption of the Supreme Court in 1774, which administered English law because it knew no other and the limits of whose jurisdiction were undefined. The Act of 1781 restricted English law to English persons, and defined this Court's authority. Cornwallis, through his regulations, pruned the Islamic criminal law of its harsher features[2] and so made Indian law more humane for a time than its British counterpart. But as British judges replaced Indian, the absence of a definite code, and the reliance which had in consequence to be placed on experts in local law, became more and more irksome. The beginning of modern Indian public law came in 1833 with the creation of the Indian Law Commission which in due time (1861) produced the Indian Penal Code and later the codes of criminal and civil procedure.

After the question of the content of law came that of its administration. Until the dismissal of Muhammad Reza Khan in 1790 criminal justice remained in the hands of the nawab. From this time the civil and criminal courts were both controlled by the Company. There was a

[1] Bentinck MSS. Lord William to Charles Grant, 21 Dec. 1832.
[2] Such as mutilation of limbs for small offences.

central criminal court in Calcutta and four 'courts of circuit' which made tours twice a year from Calcutta, Murshidabad, Patna, and Dacca to try cases too serious for the district courts. On the civil side the local *Diwani adalats* were renamed district or *zillah* courts backed by appeal courts at the same four centres. The two systems were linked at the district level by giving the same judicial officer both civil and criminal power. The system was regular and imposing, but it had two defects; the judges were English and often both junior and ill-acquainted with the language of the proceedings. They were therefore often unduly influenced by their expert advisers. Both the new land settlements and the new hope of obtaining justice without fear of executive interference tended to multiply suits. There thus arose a judicial block which amounted to a denial of justice. By 1812 arrears of cases in the Bengal courts amounted to 163,000. Justice was intended to be done, but the legal process was at first cumbrous to a degree. A further effect of the new system may also be noticed. Though the law was Hindu or Muslim, the procedures of the new courts were British, and the assumptions which underlay the judicial interpretations of the judges were British also. This added a further element of uncertainty to that already created by the inexperience and ignorance of the judges themselves. The elaborate procedures created a class of legal middlemen or pleaders to advise perplexed clients. The great legal profession of India thus had its birth but it is not surprising that the average suitor was bemused by the intricacy of the whole legal machine and saw in the legal process a lottery rather than the working of remote and passionless justice.

Apart from defending the country, maintaining order and administering justice, the government had to make its will effective throughout its dominions. Its most important will was the financial one, and revenue collection was its most important positive activity.[1] Its agents in this respect were the local officers. British India was divided into districts, which corresponded roughly with the *sarkars* of Mughul times. Macpherson created thirty-five districts for Bengal and Bihar, which Cornwall is reduced to twenty-three; Madras had from twenty to twenty-six, and Bombay about thirteen, with three for Sind. In each district there was a collector, whose business was to collect the revenue, a judge to administer justice, and a magistrate to maintain order. In general the collector was the head of the district though for most of this time in Bengal the judge took precedence. Bentinck introduced commissioners to supervise the district officers, but the essential unit of administration remained the district. Not until the end of the period were subordinate governorships created with the title of Chief Commissioners, as in the case of the Panjab in 1853 and Oudh in 1856. These men were subordinate governors, exercising their authority direct from the Governor-General.

The district officers were governed by the Cornwallis Code of Regulations of 1 May 1793. The aim of the regulations was to make

[1] For revenue systems see the next chapter.

permanent Cornwallis's work by defining it. 'They dealt with the commercial system, with civil and criminal justice, with the police and with the land revenue. While restating the existing position, they contemplated further changes. . . .' The regulations were intended to ensure ordered administration and prevent any return to the chaos and abuses of the past. In this they succeeded but they easily became in their turn a cast-iron mould hindering measures to meet new situations. In particular they were unsuited for detailed application to newly acquired, unsettled, or disorganized regions. Hence arose the distinction between regulation and non-regulation provinces. The Bengal Presidency, in its expansion up to the Jumna, was generally subjected to the regulations. But other areas were specifically excepted, the rule being that the *spirit* of the regulations should be observed so far as local conditions permitted. Thus the Delhi territory acquired in 1803, Assam, Arakan, and Tenasserim in 1824, the Saugar and Narbadda territories in 1818, and the Panjab in 1849, became non-regulation provinces. Collectors in these areas were known as deputy commissioners and a very practical consequence was the freedom to appoint military officers to perform civil duties.

The last problem of power confronting the British was that of the control of the dependent Indian states. We have seen how the Company's hope of forming an element in an Indian concert of powers faded and how the plan of a ring fence (never very enthusiastically entertained) foundered on the rocks of central Indian anarchy. The wars of Lord Hastings left the Company supreme in India surrounded by a number of dependent states. How were they to be treated? Lord Hastings's system consisted in extending the subsidiary system to certain Maratha states and assuming feudal powers of control over a medley of smaller ones. In territorial terms it amounted to a putting on ice, as it were, of numbers of states in their then momentary extent and boundaries. Like so many Lot's wives, the Indian states were petrified in their last backward look at independence. The first fact which emerged from Lord Hastings's work was that of paramountcy. The doctrine was preached by Metcalfe but not explicitly claimed for fear of raising difficult legal questions of legitimacy and Mughul pretensions. Nevertheless, it was a fact from this time, and the government acted as though it was a fact. But if paramountcy was a fact, there were also degrees of subordination. First came such states as Hyderabad and Sindia which possessed an independent origin and claimed an independent status; until 1829 the Nizam used the royal 'we' in correspondence and was addressed in terms implying superiority. Then came states of similar origin like Oudh which had sunk lower in the scale of dependence as a result of treaties. Thirdly there were the treaty states, whose being derived from a specific treaty or which by treaty recognized the claims of the Company to the traditional paramountcy of the holders of imperial power. Mysore exemplified the first of these subdivisions and the Rajput states

the second. Then came the lesser chiefs who were confirmed in their possessions as part of the general settlement. These were both old as in the case of the Kathiawar chiefs and new as in that of Amir Khan, the Nawab of Tonk, and the rulers of Firozpur and Jhansi. Lastly came the 'sanad' chiefs, petty princes who simply transferred allegiance from one overlord to another. The most tenacious of independence was Hyderabad. In 1801 the new Nizam obtained confirmation of his accession from the court of Delhi and later refused the title of king on the ground that it would be an act of rebellion against the pensionary emperor; not until 1926 was the paramountcy of the government of India explicitly asserted by Lord Reading.

Over all these states the government of India asserted the right of controlling external relations whether by the provisions of specific treaties or by the general claim of overlordship. The larger were controlled in fact as well as in theory by the existence of subsidiary forces controlled by the Company though paid for by the state. There was also a generally recognized right to interfere in crises such as disputed successions. But a clear distinction was drawn between internal and external interference. The supreme government was as loth to interfere in the internal affairs of a state as it was determined not to allow any independence in its external relations. This was the policy of non-interference, around which centred most of the states' problems up to the time of Dalhousie. It may be said that in general non-interference held the field in state relations up to 1848, but circumstances forced departures from the rule in a number of instances.

These circumstances arose from the effects of the government's policy as a whole. One effect was to secure each prince from all danger of external invasion and overthrow, and the next to secure him (through the presence of a subsidiary force) from all danger of revolution and indeed from all personal risk save that of assassination. The rulers thus lacked the stimulus to activity of fear from dangers without and within; they also lacked the spur of ambition through their studious isolation by the new alien government. Rajput and other princes could rise high in the Mughul service, hold governorships and command armies. Man Singh was one of Akbar's inner council and Raja Jai Singh the Mughul officer who brought Sivājī to terms with Aurangzeb. But no such avenues to honour existed with the British; princes had to stay in their states or be nowhere. Thus there was no incentive to glory or to caution, and the natural result was apathy, irresponsibility, and vice. Another effect of the government's policy was economic embarrassment. The subsidiary forces were paid for by contributions from the states concerned. The princes concerned, for reasons of *izzat* if nothing else, also maintained armies of their own. They were thus saddled with two forces, the one efficient but expensive and beyond their control, and the other more numerous and dependent, but both inefficient and expensive. These forces (as in Oudh) were dangerous to disband and ruinous to maintain. The result was a financial strain

which the states could not bear. Some resorted to loans, as in Hyderabad, which only made things worse. Cessions of territory in lieu of subsidy brought only temporary relief, since the local pressure on an apathetic prince's patronage soon unbalanced the budget again.

The advocates of the policy of non-interference had therefore to struggle with evils which were rooted in the new system and not the result of any one individual's shortcomings. Conscientious residents might reform and exhort, but they could only palliate the symptoms and not remove the causes of the malady. That is why some of the warmest advocates of non-interference like Bentinck had to interfere on a large scale. For in practice non-interference always stopped short at a certain point. At first it was danger to the Company's security which prompted action, as in Lord Hastings's dealings with the Maratha states. As humanitarian principles grew stronger it was manifest abuses and injustice which prompted action, and as the conviction of the superiority of British administration increased, mere mismanagement sufficed. After the pacification of 1818 the first important case of interference occurred in Hyderabad. Here the loans of the financial house of Palmer & Co. had secured a stranglehold on the state's finances, and the reforming zeal of the resident Metcalfe forced the hand of a reluctant Governor-General The case of Bharatpur in 1826 arose out of a disputed succession and resolved itself into an old-fashioned defiance of the paramount power. Lord William Bentinck was a firm believer in non-intervention. But he found himself compelled to take over the administration of Mysore in 1831 owing to the excesses of the raja. Characteristically, he stopped short of outright annexation so that the state could be handed back to Indian control in 1881 to become one of the model states of later days. Coorg was annexed outright in 1834 at the request of the inhabitants, who could no longer bear the abnormalities of the ruling family, and so was Jaintia in Assam following the sacrifice of three British Indian subjects to Kali. In these measures the humanitarian as well as the reforming motive can be seen. They all had the justification that actual violence had occurred or grave injustice been committed. Short of this Bentinck held his hand. There were dissensions and mismanagement but no actual violence in Hyderabad, Indore, Gwalior, Jaipur,[1] and Baroda. In Oudh he insisted on reform but stopped short of taking over the government. Auckland annexed only the small state of Karnul in Madras, and the tale of interference (before 1848) was concluded by Ellenborough's destruction of the Sindian army in 1843. In this case the danger which might come from the presence of a hostile army in the rear in the event of a Sikh war was a leading motive and Ellenborough refrained from annexation. We can thus say that during the period 1818–48 the British sought to control Indian India by a policy of external isolation, by military control through subsidiary forces and

[1] Violence occurred in Jaipur just after Bentinck's departure when the assistant resident was murdered.

well-placed cantonments, and by internal non-interference. The policy may be summed up as isolation and non-interference tempered by annexation. The states were not so much pillars of British supremacy as its divided and discredited opponents.

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CHAPTER 6

The People and the Government—The Village, the Land, and Trade

HAVING noted the measures by which the new government cemented its hold on the country, we can now consider the effect which it had on the people themselves. The official in Calcutta saw a congeries of peoples with a baffling variety of customs divided by ancient animosities and modern tensions. The cultivator in the village at first saw only a new kind of tax collector, more implacable if not more rapacious than before. It would be a great mistake to suppose, however, that the population of India was merely a uniform peasant 'mass'. The bulk of the people certainly lived in the villages, but they were woven into a series of intricate social patterns. Position depended as much upon caste as on wealth and as much upon landholding as upon either. The unit of society was the village; there were no Indian towns with corporate traditions like those of Europe. Indian towns were either the shadows of rulers like Delhi, Hyderabad, or Lahore, or export centres like Surat, Madras, and Bombay, or places of pilgrimage like Benares and Mathura. The village in general was a closely knit social and self-sufficing economic unit, which had shown extraordinary resilience through ages of invasion. The impact of government on the people meant essentially the impact of government on the village. The village society was thus described by Metcalfe.[1]

> The village Communities are little Republics, having nearly everything they want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds to revolution; Hindu, Pathan, Mughul, Mahratta, Sikh, English, are masters in turn, but the village communities remain the same. In times of trouble they arm and fortify themselves; a hostile army passes through the country; the Village Community collect their cattle within their walls, and let the army pass unprovoked; if plunder and devastation be directed against themselves and the force employed be irresistible, they flee to friendly villages at a distance, but when the storm has passed over they return and resume their occupation. If a country remains for a series of years the scene of continual pillage and massacre, so that the villages cannot be inhabited, the villagers nevertheless return whenever the power of peaceable possession revives. A generation may pass away but the succeeding generations will return. The sons will take the place of their fathers, the same site for the village, the same position for the houses, the same lands will be reoccupied by the descendents of those who were

[1] The village in Metcalfe's mind was the north and central Indian village. But the description was valid everywhere for its emphasis on the tenacity of the village unit.

driven out when the village was depopulated; and it is not a trifling matter that will drive them out, for they will often maintain their post through times of disturbance and convulsion, and acquire strength sufficient to resist pillage and oppression with success.

The essential contact between the village and the outside world was through the revenue collector. He might be a direct nominee of government or the agent of a local lord or rent collector; in any case the impulses of government were felt through his agency. There was next the occasional intervention of judicial officers in the case of serious crimes. Before the British period these occasions were rare and sporadic. In general the village elders were left to settle the ordinary disputes of property while the caste councils settled a large range of personal matters. The elders were held responsible for major personal crimes and offences like cattle stealing. But they were to a large extent their own police and brought offenders to justice in their own way. The third visitants of the pre-British village were the armies of the local governors or rebel leaders or local robber chiefs. During the hey-day of the empire these were in the main limited to the marches of large armies, whose movements, if devastating, were fairly regular. In later days as confusion grew the numbers of these bodies increased though their size declined. They covered more territory and at last their movements were largely dictated by the prospect of wringing money from villages to buy a few more months' service from mutinous troops. The reply of the village was submission when unavoidable, flight when the visitation seemed likely to be short-lived, and resistance if at all practicable. It was the era of the fortified village all over the Deccan and the north, old *sarais*, walled gardens, or other enclosures being used where possible or mud walls erected for the purpose.

The first effect of British administration was the elimination of these military locusts and their aftermath, the plundering band and the *dacoit*. The Pindari scourge and the Sikh bands were the last organized bodies of rural plunderers. Once these had been disposed of there only remained *dacoits* as the residuary legatees of the great anarchy. Dacoity was put down firmly and finally by the Company's officers in each area as it came under their control. In the Delhi District disorganization had reached such a pitch that the city itself was divided into wards for plunder by bands in the neighbourhood; the revenue officers had to go out with regular infantry and guns and were sometimes received with such 'briskness' as 'temporarily to stagger them'. The restoration of peace and security to the countryside was pure gain to the villagers.

The second effect of British administration upon village life was a steadily increasing interference from outside. This came about from both their revenue and judicial activities.[1] At first the old revenue system was left untouched, annual sums being collected according to

[1] The transfer was less obvious in Bengal because the *zamindari* system continued. The change was largely one of personnel, arising from the coming in of new men as *zamindars*, and it was not for the better.

the existing methods of assessment and collection. Then came fact-finding officers and after them experimental modes of assessment; finally, there was measurement and calculation and an established demand based on the information collected. The net result of all this activity was the gradual transfer of authority within the village from the village elders to agents of government. In the north-west, for example, the village elders had bargained with the agents or *amils* of government or local chief, and having agreed upon the total assessment for the year had themselves divided the amount to be paid among the various cultivators and seen to its collection. Eventually revenue officers not only measured and assessed the village land, but divided the demand among the cultivators. The elders were consulted at the stages of assessment and division of demand, but not to the exclusion of the general body of cultivators. They were accorded a complimentary respect by the officials but their authority was undermined because their power over the cultivators was taken away. The same process occurred in judicial matters. As police were organized in the districts they took cognizance of crimes which had formerly been largely left to the discretion of the village officials. The cases which arose, both revenue and criminal, were dealt with in district courts presided over by alien and often youthful officials and employing a strange and cumbrous procedure. From the villagers' point of view, anything might come out of a case at a local court. Whereas in medieval England the royal courts attracted cases from the baronial ones by offering better justice, in Company India the new courts attracted cases by offering the chance of success to bad cases. The legal process was looked upon as a lottery, and men with bad cases preferred a chance of success in a distant court to the probability of failure amongst those who knew them. In this sphere also the authority of the village elder was undermined.

Thus it came about that while the British administrators of the early nineteenth century with one voice earnestly desired to restore the vigour of the village community, their measures had the effect of depressing it even where it was still working well. In some parts of India the old village autonomy had already disappeared and in others only the wrecks of it were left; where it was in health it slowly decayed, and where it was non-existent or feeble it failed to revive. The basic reason was, in the case of healthy villages, the transfer of authority to new central agents, and where it was in decay, the removal of usurping authorities in favour not of the village elders but of those same central agents. Thus in Madras the local *zamindars* and *polygars* lost their authority, not to revived village councils but to revenue, judicial, and police officials. The British hymn of praise to the traditional *panchayat* turned out to be a funeral dirge. Efficiency triumphed at the expense of local autonomy and organic village life.

But the position of the village elders and their *panchayats* was only one facet of the face of Indian rural life. There remained the cultivator

in general. He now enjoyed freedom from violence and war but he was still concerned with his security of tenure, the amount he had to pay to government, and the manner of his paying. Land revenue was the traditional mainstay of Indian governmental finance, and government's claim to a share of the annual produce was a universally accepted obligation. In the times of the Mauryas and Guptas it was said to be a sixth of the total or gross produce;[1] under Akbar it was fixed at a third while in the Deccan it was as high as a half. These amounts were tempered by the difficulty of collection in a widely scattered society which produced a perennial and well-understood gap between demand and actual payment. There was an infinite diversity of practice and no figure of proportion can be taken to have applied universally and always. After their early days in Bengal, the British set themselves to evolve a system both effective and fair, and in the main and in the long run they were conspicuously successful. The revenue system which they evolved stands as a whole today; the only large change since independence has been the abolition of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal and the *zamindari* system connected with it. Both of these had been much modified by a series of measures before 1947 and the abolition of the former was in preparation.

The first great area of revenue settlement was Bengal and Bihar, where hereditary *zamindars* acted as go-betweens between government and cultivator. These men were not landholders in the northern sense but hereditary tax-collectors, often on a large scale. After a number of experiments by Warren Hastings, who was not conspicuously successful as a revenue officer, the question was settled by Cornwallis with his Permanent Settlement in 1793. This measure has already been described in Book I, Chapter 7, and a brief reference must suffice here. The *zamindar* tax-collectors were recognized as *zamindar* landlords in the English sense. The amounts of their annual payments were fixed once and for all and they were left free to retain the balance between their payments to governments and collections from their tenants. As a consequence they enjoyed the whole benefit of increased cultivation which was the result of security from 1770 onwards. But the demand was at first too high for many of them to meet in the wasted state of the country. Instead of the old method of beatings and bargainings as a prelude to an agreed payment short of the demand, the new government substituted sale of estates to realize arrears. The result was a large change in the personnel of *zamindars* and the substitution of many Calcutta financiers for long-settled families. Thus the Permanent Settlement brought in numbers of absentee landlords in place of resident *zamindars*, snapping the personal link between them and the cultivators. A harsher tone spread into rural life and the cultivator got little benefit from the spread of cultivation except a bare livelihood for more people. The effect of the change was reminiscent of the change

[1] One-sixth is the share mentioned in the Laws of Manu, rising to one-fourth in times of war or other emergency.

in sixteenth-century England from the easy-going monastic landlords to the pushing new men of Henry VIII. During the nineteenth century efforts were made to protect the tenant from the landlord. They were not without effect, but the system remained intact throughout the British period. Its political advantages, specially in its earlier days were considerable, but socially the loss was substantial.

The Permanent Settlement and the *zamindari* system were extended to Benares and Orissa and to the Northern Sarkars in 1802–5. But by then the manifest defects of the system in practice had begun to raise doubts. The result was that in the settlement of the Madras Presidency, which only became a practical issue with the taking over of the Mysore and Carnatic lands in 1799–1801, a wholly different procedure was adopted. This was the *ryotwari* system or method of settlement direct with the cultivator, which is associated with the name of Sir Thomas Munro. He advocated it as the result of his settlement work in the early years of the last century. He came to know village life and its problems intimately and became convinced of the evils both of uncontrolled landlords and of final once-for-all settlements. At this time the *zamindari*, *ryotwari*, and village settlement systems all existed within the presidency. During his governorship of Madras the *ryotwari* system became the rule, but it only acquired its modern methodical form from 1855. The essence of the *ryotwari* plan is that the settlement is made direct with the *ryot* or cultivator, and that the settlement is temporary, not permanent. The connexion of these two features is a matter of fact rather than of logic, and the temporary principle was only finally accepted in 1883. After measurement and assessment according to the nature of the soil and crop, a settlement was made with each individual cultivator for a period of years, the standard being thirty. The holdings were necessarily small, the average in recent times being $6\frac{1}{2}$ acres. Once the settlement was made the holder enjoyed free tenure so long as he paid his legal dues, and the rate could not be varied until the end of the fixed term of years. Any improvements in or increase of cultivation, or upward move of prices therefore directly benefited him. He could sell or alienate his land, and he could be sold up on failure to pay his dues, but there were remissions of demand in times of famine or drought, and no action could be taken without due process of law. The share of the government was eventually fixed at half the estimated *net* value of the crop, that is, after deducting the expenses of cultivation and other incidentals. The *ryotwari* system had the great advantage of removing the *zamindar* middleman between government and cultivator, who too often acted as a screen behind which oppression could go on undetected. On the other hand it left the cultivator at the mercy of the government officers with their zeal for full collection and tendency to over-assess through ignorance or disregard of the old devices for reducing the full nominal demand. Roughly we may say that the cultivator gained security and freedom from oppression in the first half of the century, but suffered from over-assessment. In the second

half this defect was removed through a more understanding administration, so that the cultivator grew more prosperous as well as being secure. Individual justice was done but there was clearly no room for the village community.

In Bombay the *ryotwari* system was followed with local variations. Both in Gujarat and the Deccan the British took over going concerns from the Marathas. At first they continued the existing systems and then gradually modified them according to the *ryotwari* principle. In Gujarat the local officers or *mamlatdars* had bargained with the village *desais* and *patels* who had then been left to raise the agreed sums in their own way without interference. From 1816 onwards the *ryotwari* system was gradually introduced. The part played by the *patel* was gradually eliminated and his place taken by the *talati* or village accountant, who was appointed directly by the Bombay government. In the Deccan Elphinstone endeavoured to retain the best features of the Maratha system while abolishing such imposts as *chauth*. The *patel* was retained under the *mamlatdar*, who was in turn supervised by British district officers. Civil cases from the villages were referred to *panchayats* while criminal ones went to the collector. In time a complete survey and measurement was made of every holding. The demand, however, was fixed district by district and then divided among the holdings according to a complicated table of soils and types of crop. As in Madras the settlement was for thirty years. There was thus elasticity for the cultivator but little discretion for the *patel*. It may be said in fact that the general effect of the settlement in both these areas was to stabilize the position of the cultivator, making improvement possible and profitable, but to depress the status of the village officers and the village community. In Gujarat the *patel* faded out altogether while in the Deccan he was closely supervised by the *mamlatdar* and lost the discretion of dividing the demand amongst his villagers. As in Madras justice for the individual was purchased at the price of organic life for the village community. The functions still left to the *panchayats* by Elphinstone were insufficient to outweigh the loss by the village officers of discretion in revenue matters. When the turn of Sind came the same *ryotwari* plan was adopted with the usual local variations.

In the great area of the north-west, beyond Bengal and Bihar, the British succeeded to the disordered administration of Oudh and the chaotic conditions of the Delhi region. Benares was permanently settled by Shore, so that the region consisted of the ceded districts of Oudh, the conquered (from the Marathas) districts between the Ganges and the Jumna, the Delhi territory, and later the whole of the Panjab. Here there were two types of holding, the estates of the great land-owners or *taluqdars*, many of ancient lineage, and village communities. At first much confusion prevailed. Settlements were made for short periods and over-assessment was general. The first great step was the decision in 1811 not to proceed with a permanent settlement. The next step was Holt Mackenzie's minute of 1819 which became the

basis of Regulation VII of 1822. But it was Lord William Bentinck in his great northern tour who set in motion the scientific settlement of the whole region. Between 1833 and 1853 R. M. Bird and James Thomason carried through a work which was a monument of patient labour and detailed investigation. The settlement was temporary, the usual period of thirty years being favoured, and there was the usual detailed measurement as a prelude to assessment. But the settlement was made with village-communities, as in the Delhi District, or with separate estates or *mahals* as in many parts of the later United Provinces. Hence it was known as the *mahalwari* system. At first the village elders apportioned the demand amongst their members, but later the demand, having been agreed as a whole with the elders, was divided among the cultivators according to the measurements of the detailed survey. The Panjab in its turn was settled broadly on the same lines. In this settlement or series of settlements much greater care was taken to safeguard the position of the village communities, which were indeed much more robust than in most other parts of India. But the turning of the *patwari* or village record-keeper into a paid government official, the ever-increasing reliance on scientific surveys both for general assessment and detailed distribution of the demand, and the diversion of legal cases to the new courts, all tended to sap the strength of village institutions. In the north, as elsewhere, the villager tended to look increasingly away from the elders towards authorities outside the village in the matters which most intimately affected his well-being. The process was slower than elsewhere and may perhaps be described as a gradual withering away rather than as a speedy or sudden disappearance. The settlement in the Central Provinces after the annexation of the Nagpur state in 1853 was on similar lines.

We can now sum up the broad effects of the British land revenue operations. In the Permanent Settlement areas they produced a country of great landed estates, where the link between the landlord and the cultivator tenant was tenuous both personally and in interest. The efforts to protect tenants from exploitation were never more than partly successful, and there were the evils of a large tenantry and a growing body of landless men. Elsewhere the general justice of the settlements has been attested by the absence of any large movement for change. The process of assessment and collection became familiar and then fixed by repetition and soon became hallowed as custom. The revenue procedure acquired the prestige of Todar Mal's *bandobast* in Akbar's day; it became part of the settled order of things. At first the new system displayed a number of evils. There was the general tendency to over-assessment, even with conscientious officers like Metcalfe and Munro. This arose from imperfect information, from a failure to relate properly the report of the former state of a region with its existing condition, from a failure to appreciate the *tentative* nature of all figures of traditional demand, and from a natural desire to gain credit with one's superiors by enhancing the revenue yield. Along with

over-assessment went over-collection, or the insistence on realizing the revenue demand in full. It was difficult for the British revenue collectors, with their precise and unimaginative minds, influenced by the trend of an age which gloried in science and accuracy, to realize that all revenue figures of the past were symbols of desire and submission rather than exact statements of demand and payment. There was also much misunderstanding of rent-free tenures which were found abounding in every part of the country. The grant of these tenures was the customary way of supporting religion, learning, and culture generally, which were all closely linked together. In the eighteenth century they increased rapidly and were often unsupported by past proof of gifts or by the nature of present usage. Nevertheless there was a substratum of value in these grants, and the tendency to sweep them all away as wasteful or harmful caused much misery and more resentment. But the desire to do justice ran like a redeeming thread through the government's revenue policy. These abuses were errors of judgement and knowledge rather than lapses of virtue, and they steadily gave way before the advance of knowledge and experience. From the time of Bentinck in the north and the governorships of Elphinstone and Munro in the west and south, they tended to decrease and disappear.[1] The general result was that the land tax became a steadily decreasing burden on agriculture. The demand declined from a third or more of the gross produce to a sixth or less. In 1925 it was reckoned that while prices had risen 117 per cent. between 1903 and 1924, the land tax had risen not more than 20 per cent., and this fact was agreed in 1931 by a Congress committee of inquiry.[2] There was a steady increase of cultivation along with a large increase of population.

But there were other defects in the system which were more deep-rooted. One was the sustained policy of selling up holdings for arrears of tax. This was thought to be a humane departure from the old system of coercion with its *zabardasti* or bullyings and beatings. But in fact it was a cruel kindness, for it meant that many a landholder preserved his skin at the expense of his land. We have already seen the effect of this policy in displacing the old *zamindars* of Bengal. The process went on everywhere; its tendency was to swell at every time of difficulty the number of landless men on the one hand, and the indebtedness of the survivors on the other. Many preferred virtual serfdom to the moneylenders to the outright loss of their holdings. A further evil associated with the *ryotwari* system of smallholdings was the fragmentation of holdings. This was the result of increasing population lacking other means of support together with the system of equal division among descendants, and it is difficult to see how it could have been avoided altogether. But where holdings became too small to

[1] The proceedings of the Inam Commission under Dalhousie were an exception to this rule.

[2] The Tax Inquiry Committee of 1925.

provide subsistence for a family the result was much the same as if the land had been lost altogether.

On the credit side must first be set the general sense of justice which the new systems gradually infused throughout the countryside. This was associated with the new security, the new certainty of demand, the gradually established moderation of that demand, and the scientific adjustment of demand to the different types of soil, climate, and crop. Next comes the great increase of cultivation. Instead of landlords travelling long distances to tempt tenants to cultivate their land, the more familiar practice of tenants begging for waste plots, or men going out to marginal lands in search of a livelihood grew up. By 1880 shortage of cultivators had been replaced by shortage of land. Along with increase of cultivation went increase of population. The estimated 100 million people in Akbar's India and 130 million in 1800 had become 206 million at the first census in 1872.[1] More people and more cultivation were both cause and effect of each other, but neither would have been possible if the land system had not been both flexible and reasonably just.

Though India was dominantly an agricultural country it was not wholly so; the artisan and the craftsman, the trader and the merchant, and government's policy towards them, have also to be considered. Setting aside village industries for village needs and luxury industries for the wealthy few, India's customary industrial activity was comprised in the word cotton. The flourishing trade in cotton piece goods of Mughul times continued during most of the eighteenth century. Most of the cotton export was channelled through the East India Company which found a ready market for re-export to Europe after the home market in England was closed to it by commercial jealousy.[2] But by the end of the century the picture had changed. In 1740 England had begun to export her own cotton hand-made piece goods to Europe; by 1800 she was exporting machine-made cotton goods to India. At the same time the re-export trade to Europe for Indian cottons dried up with the long-continued French wars. The European market was thus closed to India at the same time that the Indian market was invaded by cotton machine goods from Lancashire. The principle of free trade ruled out any hope of protection for the Indian handicraft industry, and there thus began the long decline of the old Indian handicraft weaving industry. Weavers fell into distress and then returned to the land. By the time of the Mutiny India's ancient and famous cotton industry had shrunk to the production of homespun or *khaddar* for the villager and to a limited quantity of the finest 'counts'. The machine goods of Lancashire together with the free trade policy had killed the Indian cotton industry. From that time Indian exports changed their character from finished articles like cotton and silk piece

[1] This was generally considered to have been an under-estimate. The estimate for Akbar's India is W. H. Moreland's and for 1800 my own.

[2] In the early eighteenth century.

goods and quality materials like indigo to raw materials in bulk. Changes in methods of transport such as the introduction of steamships and railways and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 made this development possible.

If the handicraftsmen fell on evil times, however, for all traders the period was one of enlargement. The new security and the increased intercourse with Europe encouraged both internal and external trade. Internally, at least, the new economic doctrines were beneficial, for they brought about the abolition of inland transit duties in 1835 to the great benefit of all traders. The turning-point in commercial development was the Charter Act of 1813, which abolished the East India Company's monopoly of commerce. This was a response to the demand from the new manufacturers for more markets for their goods as well as the old commercial demand for freedom. The new private merchant now took the place of the Company in the organization of Indo-British trade. But development was not at first as rapid as had been expected. The new traders lacked capital and even when the French wars ended this did not flow to the east because more tempting fields lay to hand in Europe and America. The period from 1813 to 1858 was therefore one of preparation on the part of both the private merchant and the government.

The private merchant found himself free from Company control but soon realized that the Company was not the cause of all commercial evil in India. He lacked capital for development and he lacked the means for large-scale operations which the nature of the country required. His working capital came largely from the savings of the Company's officers. The merchants evolved the managing agency system for the conduct of their affairs whereby one firm would undertake a variety of different functions. An incidental result was that the whole European community shared in any commercial slumps such as the collapse of the agency houses in the early thirties. With this limited capital the private merchants could trade but they could not launch out in new directions or find the means for overcoming the large natural obstacles to big-scale development. Hence arose a cry for government assistance in removing hindrances to commercial action. Give us the conditions and we will produce the profits was the argument. The Company's role as monopolist was to be converted into that of industrial assistant.

It would not be too much to say that in 1813 the Company, as the ruler of India, had no economic policy. So far as it had one indeed, it was to have no policy, for it was increasingly influenced by the new *laissez-faire* theories. But pressure from India and at home forced it into economic action in the name of economic liberty. Its measures can be broadly described as 'enabling action', action designed to enable private traders to develop their activities. The period can be subdivided into that of experiment, which lasted to the mid eighteen-thirties and that of positive action, which lasted to the Mutiny and

beyond. There was, of course, considerable overlapping of these dates. The first tentative steps were taken by Lord Hastings with his measures to reopen the Mughul irrigation canals. In 1825 the Company helped in the establishment of an iron works. Lord William Bentinck made a number of experiments. A great believer in good communications he lamented that Metcalfe 'had no idea of a good road'. One of the first efforts in this direction was the building of the road from Bombay to Poona in 1830. Bentinck introduced steam navigation on rivers and thus made possible the opening up of Assam. He gave a further push to irrigation projects and considered draining schemes in Bengal. In 1834 he sent for tea seeds from China and started government tea gardens and also encouraged coffee cultivation.

But large developments were held back by the great natural obstacles. In India this was partly a matter of finance but mainly a matter of communications. Local finance was strengthened by the establishment of three presidency banks. But further capital could not be obtained until there was a prospect of a good return and a suitable subject for investment. The provision of means of transport would create a prospect of good returns for commercial capital, and the provision of the means provided a field of investment for the industrial investor. The solution of the transport problem is the key to modern Indian economic development. So long as that problem was unsolved, mere size defeated most schemes of development. You cannot feed large-scale industry or distribute mass-produced products by bullock wagons or hitch modern industry to a camel. The government's first enabling measure was therefore to improve the means of transport. Steam navigation was introduced on the rivers. The next measure was the provision of good roads. In 1839 the Grand Trunk road from Calcutta to Delhi was commenced and this was followed by links between the major cities of British India. It was now possible for goods to be moved but there was still only the bullock wagon to move them. The third and decisive step was the introduction of railways. This was the work of Lord Dalhousie and in some respects may be regarded as his greatest. The first agreements were signed in 1849 and the whole programme of railway development was defined in his famous minute of 1853. By the time of the Mutiny some 200 miles of track had been constructed; the mutiny experience emphasized their military as well as commercial value and thereafter development was rapid.

The advent of railways was decisive for Indian economic development in a number of ways. Firstly they not only provided a track along which goods could be transported, but carriages to transport them. Henceforth fuel could be brought to the centres of power and production and the products of those centres could be distributed cheaply and widely. The chronic transport bottle-neck of Indian industry was broken. The way was thus paved for the development of large-scale industries. It was no accident that the development of the jute and cotton, the coal and iron, and the plantation industries progressed

slowly before 1850 and occurred in quick succession thereafter. Transport is the life-blood of industry and without railways it lacked the arteries through which to flow. Secondly railways made it possible to deal with famines in a way never possible before. The essence of famine relief is the provision of supplies from outside the famine area in time, and this was now made possible by the railway. Thirdly the construction of railways commenced a new phase of capital import into India and popularized the joint-stock method organizing trade and finance. Finally the railways gave to the people of India a new mobility of which they took full advantage and so formed an important factor in building up the new India. The iron rail has been called a stake which pierced the heart of the village community and slowly drained its life blood away;[1] it was also a pile driven into the marsh of a static community upon which a new and forward-looking society could be founded.

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[1] J. Buchanan, *Development of Industrial Enterprise in India.*

CHAPTER 7

Social Policy and Cultural Contacts

NOTHING would have surprised the founders of the East India Company more than to have been told that they would one day be held responsible for the moral and material progress of the whole country. The British went to the country as traders and some of them (like Sir Thomas Roe) became interested observers of its life. But even when they began to take part in internal politics they were concerned with nothing more than questions of power. The acquisition of Bengal turned their attention to the revenue, but they looked upon it as the means of power for the Company and of private enrichment for themselves. It was the private excesses of the Company's servants and indignation against the possessors of ill-gotten gains that first attracted attention to the welfare of India. The principle that the welfare of the governed must be an object of government was enunciated by Burke in the debates which preceded the Regulating Act. It may be said to have been statutorily accepted by Pitt's India Act in 1784 and to have been publicly emphasized and responsibility for it enforced by the proceedings of Warren Hastings's impeachment.

But this concept of welfare was one of justice in the acts of government rather than of the positive promotion of the happiness and welfare of the people. We see the first signs of this in Wilberforce's proposal in 1793 to give governmental aid to Christian activity. But in 1807 it was still possible for Sir John Barlow to define the objects of the government in India without mentioning the subject of welfare. A turning-point in this, as in economic matters, came with the Charter Act of 1813 with its clause setting aside a *lakh* of rupees a year for the advancement of the arts and sciences. Wars supervened and it was not until the liberal wind blew fresher in the twenties that the matter became a major concern of government. In 1828 the Tory President of the Board of Control, Lord Ellenborough, wrote to Lord William Bentinck, 'We have a great moral duty to perform to the people of India', and the Whig Governor-General fully reciprocated the sentiment.

It was during these years that the principle of the moral duty of the government to promote the welfare of the people was accepted by the governing class in England. But it was not so easy to decide the kind of welfare which was to be promoted. Was it to be Hindu, Muslim, or British welfare, traditional or modern welfare? The first opinion was that the government's duty lay in restoring the old society and fostering the development of that society along traditional lines. This found

support among many Company servants who had acquired a taste and respect for oriental learning and culture. They were reinforced by the growing interest in oriental culture, Hindu as well as Islamic, which developed during the latter part of the eighteenth century. Sir William Jones, who discovered the connexion between Sanskrit and the Aryan languages, William Wilkins the Persian scholar, and Horace Hayman Wilson were leaders in this movement. They would give peace and security, justice and mercy, but interfere with local society as little as possible and leave it as far as possible to its own devices. Men like the Abbé Raynal and James Forbes found much merit in the ancient ways of life as well as depth in traditional thought.

Against this conservative and static view were set the radical views of a forward looking school. The civilizations of the East had long been regarded with respect, if not with approval, by the men of the West. They were admitted to be powerful and talented if erring and sometimes hostile. Jesuit reports represented Akbar as the philosopher king of the East and in the eighteenth century came a wave of Sinophilism from the same sources. China was widely regarded for a time as the leading civilized state. This was never, perhaps, a majority view, but if the European was regarded as the most advanced civilization, it was only a *primus inter pares*. But the rationalist movement of the eighteenth century now changed all this. Its devotees believed that reason had given Europe the key to indefinite progress, that this principle, and the sciences which sprang from it, made European civilization different in kind as well as in degree to all others. Thus was laid the intellectual foundation of the European superiority complex of the nineteenth century. These views developed in England into the vigorous Utilitarian school. Adam Smith in economics, Jeremy Bentham in ethics and law, James Mill in logic and philosophy attacked old positions and advocated new remedies with a robust vigour born of a conviction that the forces of progress were on their side. Their view of India was supplied by James Mill in his *History*, which was begun in 1808 and published in 1817.[1] Mill found little good in Indian institutions; reason lay dormant beneath the debris of centuries; Indian thought was puerile, its religion superstitious, its customs hidebound or harmful. The remedy was to introduce reason and European knowledge. Indians would see the light and reform themselves.

The rationalists were reinforced by the influence of the Evangelical Christians. These men repudiated the scepticism of the rationalists, but they agreed with them in their humanitarianism. For them Christianity was not only a herald of salvation for the individual, but of mercy for the suffering and the oppressed. The Evangelicals, with Wilberforce at their head, were foremost in such social works as the abolition of slavery and the improvement of prisons. When they turned to non-Christian countries they became advocates of Christian missions. In India they found much ground for concern. Indian reli-

[1] J. Mill, *History of British India*, Books II and III.

gion was superstitious and rampant with idolatry; much evil existed and there was ignorance of the truth. Their zeal for souls made them eager for action. They therefore joined with the rationalists as westernizing innovators in Indian affairs.

Between the conservatives and the radicals, in the British way, stood a large group, both in India and Britain, with a foot in both camps. These were the men who accepted the liberal or Christian gospels in varying degrees, desired to introduce western culture into India but preached patience and caution. The great administrators were mostly of this school; before 1828 they were looking forward to gradual changes and after that date they tended to counsel caution. Malcolm's prescription, 'let us, therefore, calmly proceed in a course of gradual improvement', may be taken as the watchword of these men.

It was by these influences that British social policy in India was shaped. Before 1813 the conservative vein was generally ascendant; between 1813 and 1828 the conservative and liberal veins contended and precept was more prominent than practice; from 1828 the liberal view gathered strength though tempered by caution and the limits of available resources. We may define it broadly in this way. There was first an attack on abuses considered to violate the universal moral law. No plea of religion restrained action in these cases; only caution counselled delay on occasion for fear of the consequences. Then there was the introduction of European institutions, science, knowledge, and thought, in a word, the transfer of western culture to India. The voices of experience and caution secured a ban on deliberate interference with existing institutions except those that came under the first heading. But all improvements, moral and intellectual as much as material, were to derive from the West. The West was to be placed side by side with the East, and it was hoped and believed that the East would prefer the new to the old.

It now remains to follow the working out of this general attitude. The attack on breaches of the universal moral law was begun by Lord Wellesley, when in 1803 he suppressed the sacrifice of children in worship on Saugor island at the mouth of the Hughli. It is an interesting commentary on the state of opinion at that time that this action was criticized as an unjustified interference with Hindu customs. Wellesley was also aware of the evil of suttee or the practice of widows accompanying the bodies of their husbands to be burnt on the same funeral pyre with them. But fear of Hindu opinion restrained him. For the next twenty-five years the custom was under review, but each governor-general postponed action. Lord Minto tried to mitigate the evil by making rules designed to prevent coercion,[1] but this was interpreted as a kind of government sanction and the number of recorded cases in Bengal rose. The main areas were in the Panjab and Rajputana among Sikhs and Rajputs, and in Madura and the Ganges valley among the Brahmans. In the Panjab and among the Rajputs it was an

[1] Instruction of 5 Dec. 1812.

aristocratic custom, but among the Brahmans it was more widespread. In the decade 1817–26 the recorded number of cases in Bengal varied between 500 and 850 a year. The victims were rarely volunteers and the circumstances were usually sordid and evil. In 1829 Bentinck acted where others had called for reports[1] and suppressed suttee by Regulation XVII of 1829. Suttee, unlike child sacrifice, had ancient though not undisputed warrant in the *Shastras* and it was feared that its suppression might outrage the feelings of orthodox Hindus. But the opposition led by Raja Radhakant Deb went no further than to organize a petition of protest and carry an appeal to the Privy Council which was dismissed in 1833. The Bombay and Madras governments followed Bentinck's lead and steady pressure secured its gradual abolition in the Indian states. The last case of a suttee on the death of a ruler occurred at Udaipur in 1861.

There quickly followed the suppression of *thagi* in central and upper India. This was armed robbery and murder carried out in the name of religion. The *thags* used a regular ritual in their murders and believed themselves to be serving the goddess Kali by so doing. The practice had long existed but had grown to be a menace to society with the collapse of authority in central India at the turn of the century. Bentinck took their suppression in hand in 1830, the work being carried through by Sir William Sleeman with the help of men like Meadows Taylor. No petitions attempted to stay this work for its practical advantage was too obvious. Another measure of this class was the abolition of slavery, which became an anachronism in India after its abolition in the rest of the British empire in 1833. Slavery in India as an abuse had not the dramatic qualities of suttee or *thagi*. There were no chain gangs as in the West Indies and no middle passage. But its practice was widespread and deep-rooted and its evil very real. It was abolished by Lord Ellenborough's government in 1843 (Act V) by refusing to recognize slavery as a legal status.

We now turn to the class of western innovations which were superimposed, as it were, upon the existing body of customs and laws in India. The principle of equality of the subject before the law is one which lies at the root of the whole body of English law. It was equally absent from the body of Hindu custom with its special privileges for Brahmans and disabilities for the exterior castes or depressed classes. The principle was laid down by the Charter Act of 1833 in the matter of qualification for government office, thus condemning by anticipation the colour bar of which so much was heard later. It has been explained that this had little immediate effect in practice. But Bentinck went farther. He modified the Hindu law of inheritance to make it possible for a convert from Hinduism to inherit the family property. It was the first invasion of the principle of equality into the domain of Hindu personal law. A further influence in this direction was the whole

[1] It should be remembered, however, that Metcalfe when resident of Delhi, 1809–18, abolished suttee within the Delhi territory by administrative order.

system of Indian public law. The inspiration for all changes was British and the machinery of courts and legal procedure came from the same source.

These innovations, though of great importance, were subtle in their nature and slow in revealing their effects. But the next series of innovations were much more obvious in their nature and more striking in their immediate results. The first of these was the introduction of Christian missions. The early missions of the eighteenth century worked from non-British stations, like the Danes in Tranquebar and William Carey with his band of British Baptists at Serampore. They could only get a footing in the Company's territory by becoming Company's chaplains as David Brown and Henry Martyn did in Bengal and the Swartz for a time in Madras. From 1813 free entry was allowed. There followed the establishment of a network of British missions to be reinforced shortly by the Americans. The missionary with his black cloth and hat, his church and his band of converts became a familiar sight in many an up-country station. The missionaries embodied, as it were, the Evangelicals' views about India.[1] They engaged in many types of activity from pure evangelism to educational and medical work and the conduct of colleges in the great cities. They were wholly unsupported by government but could not fail to gain some prestige from their personal and racial connexions with the ruling class. In the person of Alexander Duff, the founder of the Scottish Churches College in 1830, they made a striking impact on Bengali society. They constituted an overt challenge to Hinduism and Islam, permitted though not patronized by the government. Though they could not change society except by persuasion, they formed an important channel by which western values and western knowledge were poured into India and spread through the spray of many mission stations all over the country.

The next change of importance was the government's action about language. Hitherto Persian had been the language of diplomacy throughout India and of proceedings in the higher courts. Here again Bentinck led the way. By a series of enactments beginning from 1835 English and the vernacular languages replaced Persian as the language of record and legal proceedings. It also became the language of government business. English was already being studied for its practical advantage as Persian long had been, and now, in the course of a few years, it became essential for a public career. The study of English involved some acquaintance at least with the ideas of its literature, so that these measures were also westernizing in their effects.

The most momentous of all these changes was the new education policy. At first the Company had patronized the old learning so far as it had patronized anything. Warren Hastings established the Calcutta *Madrasa* for the study of Arabic and Persian in 1781 and Jonathan Duncan the Benares Sanskrit College in 1794. The Act of 1813 pro-

[1] They were by no means all Evangelicals in theology.

vided that a *lakh* of rupees should annually be 'set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned Natives of India and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British Territories in India'.[1] After ten years a Committee of Public Instruction was set up and began to encourage ancient learning, the modern sciences, and the teaching of English. Gradually the advocates of 'useful learning', encouraged from the India House where James Mill was high in influence, grew more positive and more aggressive. The value of Indian learning and literature was questioned altogether. The controversy came to a head over a minor point;[2] it provoked Macaulay's famous and heavily overcharged minute and led to Bentinck's fateful decision. Bentinck ruled that 'the great object of the British government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science. . . .' He directed that all available funds 'be henceforth employed in imparting to the Native population knowledge of English literature and science through the medium of the English language'.[3] This decision excluded all support for oriental learning and was modified by Lord Auckland in 1840.[4] But two great decisions had been made. The main object of the government's educational efforts would be the encouragement of education whose content would be western 'literature and science' and whose medium of instruction would be English. As a result of these decisions there arose a network of English schools and colleges, supported directly by the government and a few missionary bodies and then extended through private agency by means of the grant-in-aid system. Along with the change over to English as the medium of government's legal and administrative business it made an acquaintance of the English language and western ideas essential to anyone who aspired to any sort of distinction in public life and to a large extent in private business also. The new educational system became a formidable agent of westernizing influences. Bentinck thus became a major apostle of the West in India.

And what of the Indian attitude to these measures? Hitherto the effect of European influences on Indian life and thought had been superficial and fleeting. In Mughul times there had been some interest in European art as known through the Portuguese Jesuit missions and some curiosity about European thought.[5] But these did not survive the isolationist influences of Aurangzeb's time. In the eighteenth century the aristocratic Indian world no longer had much leisure for cultivating the arts of peace. Its chief interest in Europe was political and its chief

1 Stat. 53, Geo. III, cl. 155, Sect. 43.

2 The proposal to make English a compulsory subject at the Arabic College in Calcutta.

3 Resolution of 7 Mar. 1835.

4 Minute of 24 Nov. 1839. See H. Sharp, *Selections from the Educational Records of the Govt. of India*, i. 170–80.

5 Mughul miniatures exist showing European influences, and European craftsmen were employed.

loans were military. Artillery and firearms, tactics and discipline were the object of their curiosity. Other things which interested them were European wines, horses, carriages, and similar incidental externals of life. There was some borrowing of architectural forms, with curiously hybrid results in the town-houses of Calcutta and the palaces of Lucknow. Corinthian pillars and saracenic arches jostled uneasily together. There was some disposition to sit for European painters as Daniell's portrait of Mahadji Sindia shows. But of intellectual contacts or influences there were few. Tipu's tree of liberty was a political stunt; and the only real contact was between men like Warren Hastings and Colonel Palmer on the one hand and Beneram Pandit and Tufazul Husain Khan on the other. But this, though interesting, was not fruitful, and grew less with the years. The aristocratic world of India remained largely impervious to western influences.

A change, when it came, emerged from a quarter half-way between the British and Indian worlds, and between the old aristocratic world and the new middle class which had begun to cluster round the British. This was the group of 'go-betweens' in Bengal between the British and the people. They were men of business, but many of them were also of good family and cultivated tastes. These men were in constant contact with the ablest Europeans in India. They developed an interest, not so much in European arms or viands or ways of living, as in western thought and ideas. This interest was by no means wholly cultural. It was both practical and theoretical. There was the desire to acquire mastery of the English language for the worldly advantages it would bring, and there was the wish to know the secret of the men of the West, who had so swiftly and decidedly achieved dominion in India. By the early years of the nineteenth century both these movements were in perceptible motion in Bengal. Each tended to feed the other, and both found a champion in Ram Mohan Roy, a Brahman from Krishnagar. On the British side a new class was appearing which in its turn acted as a half-way house between the official world and the new middle class. There were the judges and lawyers connected with the Supreme Court of whom the most distinguished was the Sanskrit scholar Sir William Jones. There were the missionaries, led by William Carey and his band of Baptists at Serampore, and there was the rationalist influence, embodied in the person of David Hare, the free thinking watchmaker.

These forces provided the elements for a creative movement, and the man of the moment appeared in Ram Mohan Roy. Born in 1772, he left his home in disgust at a suttee in his family, and for a few years wandered in the traditional manner seeking truth. His pilgrimage led him as far as Tibet and as deep as the doctrines of the Upanishads, of Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity. In the course of time he mastered ten languages including Sanskrit, Arabic (to study the Quran), Hebrew (for the Old Testament), Greek (for the New), Persian, and English. There followed a period of government service when

he was with Digby of Rungpur and acquainted himself with European thought. In 1815 he returned to reside in Calcutta and take up the role of reformer. The next fifteen years were filled with tireless activity. He advocated the study of the English language and of western knowledge and thought, he attacked Hindu idolatry and abuses like suttee and criticized the caste system; he championed freedom of opinion and was a pioneer of Indian journalism. His career was crowned by his journey to England in 1830 whither he went to plead the cause of the pensionary Mughul emperor[1] and oppose the petition to the Privy Council against the abolition of suttee, and there he died in 1833.[2] His positive achievements were a share in founding the Hindu college or *Vidyala* in 1816, the foundation of the first modern Indian newspaper, and the foundation of the *Brahmo Samaj*, or divine society, a reforming theistic religious group. He was persuasive enough to convert a Baptist missionary to Unitarianism and to make the first inroad from within upon the massive structure of Hindu orthodoxy.

By the time of Ram Mohan Roy's death there had arisen in Calcutta movements aiming variously at the reform of Hinduism from within, a synthesis between East and West and the outright rejection of Hinduism. The reforming movement came to be lead by Devendranath Tagore; the radical tendency, stimulated by Derozio and impelled by the Presbyterian Alexander Duff, lead to a number of notable conversions to Christianity.[3] The same tendency, though in a more subdued tone, can be traced in Bombay after 1820 and later in Madras. But the most interesting development outside Calcutta was in pre-Mutiny Delhi where Muslim intellectuals led by Maulvi Nazir Ahmad and including Altaf Husain, Hali, and centred in the Delhi College, studied western thought with enthusiasm. The seed of the new India had been sown, and the first seedlings were sprouting.

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[1] It was from the Emperor Akbar II that he received the title of raja.

[2] At Stapleton, near Bristol, on 27 Sept. 1833. A monument in Hindu style, to his memory, stands close to the entrance of Arno's Vale cemetery.

[3] The most notable was that of Madhu Sudhan Datta.

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CHAPTER 8

Dalhousie

THE accession of Dalhousie introduced a new period in the history of British India. For ten years events had been dominated by the Afghan aggression and its consequences. Now, apart from the early and brief final campaign in the Panjab, and the distant operations in Burma, peace descended upon India once more. But it was a dynamic not a static state of affairs, and for the inhabitants it was hardly more restful than war. The previous peaceful age of Bentinck and Metcalfe had also been active and forward-looking it is true; in many ways the innovations which then took place were more radical than those of Dalhousie. But they affected the people as a whole less. It was an age of beginnings rather than of accomplishments, of aspiration rather than of major achievement, and there still lingered at that time some feeling of restoration after the anarchy which had preceded 1818. By Dalhousie's time these memories had faded, and it was obvious that the government was pressing forward along new paths towards unknown goals.

Bentinck's reign had made it clear that innovation and reform would be on western lines. But Auckland had tempered the western wind with some concessions to tradition and then war had arisen to absorb the government's energies. Such projects as irrigation and land settlement proceeded, but the rulers were too busy elsewhere to raise the *tempo* of ideological aggression. Dalhousie came to India as a convinced westernizer. He hoped that his chief duties would 'consist in suggesting and carrying out those great measures of internal improvement which you are so desirous of promoting'. These measures would be western measures carried out by western agency. Dalhousie was influenced by the flowing tide of materialist utilitarianism even though he never proclaimed himself to be one and was in fact a professed Presbyterian. He believed that the promotion of civilization meant the promotion of western reforms, that western administration and western institutions were as superior to Indian as Western arms had proved more potent. With less of Macaulay's belief in the possibility of Indian internal regeneration he shared to the full Macaulay's belief in the value of western models. His temperament suited his convictions and combined with the growing self-confidence of the British in India to impart a certain arrogance to official benevolence and a certain hardness to the tone of the government. The consciousness of conquest competed with the sense of moral mission and increasingly combined with the latter to produce a sense of ingrained superiority. The old

sense of caution and humility in the presence of the problems of a sub-continent was now submerged in the flood of military success, and by the self-confidence of a people who believed that their civilization was superior to all others in actual achievement, and by virtue of its discovery of the secret of progress, increasing its lead year by year.

Dalhousie was not thirty-six when he landed in Calcutta. He was short and stocky in appearance, but he had a commanding presence, abounding energy, and an imperious temper. He refused cabinet office on his return from India partly on the ground that he did not feel able to work harmoniously with equal colleagues. He had achieved distinction in Peel's cabinet in dealing with the railway boom as Vice-President of the Board of Trade and he joined to aristocratic hauteur Scotch practicality and business sense. Almost the only gift denied him was good health, but his will sustained him through massive labours which wore out his constitution. He died in 1860 at the age of forty-eight.

Within three months of Dalhousie's arrival he was faced with a fresh crisis in the Panjab with the revolt of Diwan Mulraj at Multan. The delay during the summer of 1848 which enabled a desperate act of defiance to become a national revolt, the campaign which ended at Gujarat in March 1849, and the decision to annex have been touched on in Chapter 4 above. But Dalhousie did not stop short at annexation; he personally supervised the organization of the new province. In a very real sense he was the father of the British Panjab as it existed from 1849 to 1947. His first instrument was a board of administration of which Henry Lawrence was the head, with John Lawrence and Mansel (replaced in 1851 by Robert Montgomery) as junior members. Dalhousie found John more congenial than the imaginative and unmethodical Henry. But he felt unable to pass over the elder brother and so surrounded him with a board instead of giving him sole authority. To Henry was given the political work of dealing with the chiefs and disarming the country; to John the settlement of the land revenue and to Mansel the organization of the judiciary. For two years the board was famous alike for the ardour of its reconstructive work and the heat of its disputes. In 1851 the two brothers agreed that they could not profitably continue to work together; Dalhousie seized the occasion to send Henry to Rajputana as agent-general and to give John sole authority as Chief Commissioner of the Panjab.

Dalhousie thought that John 'taking him all in all . . . was the better man'. But more than temperament stood between the brothers in this most famous of British-Indian official quarrels. John had served his earlier years in the Delhi territory where village communities were strong and sturdy *zamindars* of moderate means dealt direct with the government. He was the friend of the cultivator, and had little use for the Sikh chiefs of the Panjab whom he regarded as oppressors of their people and as upstarts and little better than the baronial tyrants of King Stephen's reign. Henry's early service, on the other hand, had been in the north-western provinces where he had to deal with local

chiefs and landowners whose family trees stretched back a thousand years. He respected tradition and desired to preserve it if possible. Thus Henry wanted to work *through* the chiefs while John was quite prepared to work without them or in spite of them. It was the issue of reform from within with the consent and support of the aristocracy, or from above by authority and direct administrative action. Henry had opposed annexation in accordance with his principles while John was in favour of it. But it must not be supposed that Henry was in favour of the *status quo* or the old ways against his brother's reformism. Both were convinced reformers and westernizers; indeed, it was Henry's zeal for reform between the two wars that aroused Sikh opposition and helped to produce the situation which led to the second war and annexation. Reformism was the link between the two brothers; their final parting resulted from differences over methods rather than measures.

It was thus John Lawrence who completed the reorganization of the Panjab with his fifty-six picked subordinates and became the working head of 'the Panjab school'. Dalhousie was its founder and director behind the scenes, Henry Lawrence its 'suffering servant', admired but not followed, and Kipling later its poet and eulogist.[1] It early acquired an *ethos* of its own, and through the facts of its foundation by one Governor-General, the elevation of its first head to be another, its inspired publicity, the strategical importance of the province and its physical relation to the summer capital acquired an influence and reputation out of all proportion to its numbers. As men in Wellesley's or Lord Hastings's time sought the political service as the avenue to fame, in later years they aspired to entry in the Panjab branch of the civil service. The first principle of the Panjab school was direct rule. The government must deal direct with the people and all go-betweens, whether chiefs, tax-collectors, or urban Panjabis, were suspected and discouraged. Along with this went the doctrine of the 'personal touch'. Officers must move among the people knowing their virtues and vices, undeviating in their justice and unsparing of their strength. This had been learnt by John Lawrence himself in his Delhi territory days and was never altogether lost. Along with this personal touch and high sense of duty went a sense of mission. The best men of Metcalfe's day believed themselves to be the instruments of Providence. But Providence for them was inscrutable and they were by no means certain where it was leading. The men of the Panjab school had no such doubts. They had divined the purposes of the Providence they served; they went forward confident in their mission to rule, to civilize, and to modernize in the western way. They loved the Panjabi with his hearty manners, his addiction to sport, his simple 'man's man' outlook, and they were certain that God had sent them to rule him for his good.

Along with this moral and personal dynamism went other qualities.

[1] The officials of Kipling's Indian tales were mostly men of the Panjab and the Frontier.

There was a touch of ruthlessness in the Panjab official illustrated by Dalhousie's phrase, 'Unwarned by precedent, uninfluenced by example, the Sikh nation has called for war, and, on my word, sirs, they shall have it with a vengeance'. It can be traced through the Panjab treatment of the mutineers down to the Amritsar episode of 1919. The Panjab school was confident and convinced of its mission, but never quite sure of its position. Its work had a brittle quality which added perhaps to its brilliance, like polished metal, but which made it uncertain under strain and told against its permanent survival. Its great achievement was the modernization of the Panjab and its transformation into the most prosperous portion of India; its defect the failure to implant and to develop among the people the seeds of an integrated plural society. The reward of its virtues was the making of the Panjab the leader of India, the penalty of its faults the tragedy of partition.

The team which worked under John Lawrence until 1859 was not hampered by the regulations which had been developed for more settled parts of the country. The Panjab was the supreme example of the non-regulation province. A simpler code of civil and criminal procedure was drawn up and individual officers were given wide personal discretion. Working along these lines great progress was quickly made. The people were disarmed and the north-west frontier fortified. Roads were built everywhere, the most conspicuous example being the Grand Trunk road from Lahore to Peshawar. Then the welfare of the people was vigorously promoted. The land tax was reduced by about half and village settlements effected on the lines of those made in the neighbouring Delhi territory. The old abuses of slavery, *thagi*, and dacoity were suppressed. Trade was encouraged by the abolition of internal transit duties. Finally great projects of irrigation were commenced, which were to make the Panjab the garden of India. The immediate result was a release of energy for peaceful pursuits, or perhaps we should say a transfer of this best of Panjabi commodities from war to peace. The short-term reward was great. By 1857 the new system had so far won the martial people that when the Mutiny came the province remained tranquil and loyal while the Sikhs actively assisted in its suppression.

The only other large-scale war in which Dalhousie was engaged was in Burma. This has already been dealt with in Chapter 3 above and it only remains to note its results. Dalhousie showed caution in its conduct and wise restraint in limiting annexation to lower Burma. He bestowed the same care in the organization of this territory as in the case of the Panjab. He found an eastern Lawrence in Sir Arthur Phayre and maintained the same close touch in his organizing measures.

The next great scene of Dalhousie's activity was the Indian states. The first period of British relations with the states has been described by Sir W. Lee-Warner as that of the 'ring fence', which lasted until the Hastings's settlement of 1813–18. States were treated as foreign and

there was no internal interference. The second period was that of 'subordinate isolation' lasting until Dalhousie's time, and the third was that of 'subordinate union' which was the result both of Dalhousie's measures and the reaction which they provoked. In this second period the British government claimed paramountcy which meant that the states were both unable to engage in aggression and protected from external attacks. A consequence was that the rulers were both insulated from internal sedition and shut out from any share in all-India affairs. Many princes lost interest in the routine of local administration so that abuses multiplied while their subjects had no remedy. The government was reluctant to intervene, but was pressed by the rising tide of humanitarian opinion. The result was non-interference tempered by occasional annexation for extreme misgovernment, such as Bentinck's action in Coorg and Mysore and his threat to Oudh in 1831.

When Dalhousie arrived misgovernment was more widespread and humanitarian opinion stronger than ever before. To this situation he added his own personal equation and the result was the annexation policy, of which the famous doctrine of lapse was only a part. Dalhousie believed that British administration was immensely better than the contemporary Indian; he regarded the states as obsolete in the new India he envisaged, and he was very sensitive to the charge of princely misgovernment, which he considered a slur on the name of British rule in India. He was neither ruthless nor deaf to ancient rights, but other things being equal, he considered that annexation was desirable when possible. 'His predecessors had acted on the principle of avoiding annexation if it could be avoided; Dalhousie acted on the general principle of annexing if he could do so legitimately.'

The first part of his annexation policy was 'the doctrine of lapse'. We can take as our starting-point the general assumption of paramountcy which provided ground for interference in any state in certain circumstances. One of these circumstances was the succession to the *gadi* or throne. The Paramount Power insisted on the right of recognizing the succession, with its corollary of regulating it in doubtful or disputed cases, as had been done in the cases of Bharatpur and Gwalior. But what if there was no recognized natural heir? Hindu law provided for this contingency by the practice of adoption, those so adopted becoming for all legal purposes the heirs of their adoptive fathers. Dalhousie claimed that since succession had to be recognized by the Paramount Power, princely adoptions could only be valid if ratified by the supreme government. If that was withheld, the state would pass by 'lapse' to the Paramount Power. There were two qualifications to this rule. The first was that it only applied to Hindu princes amongst whom adoption was recognized as customarily legal, and the second was a distinction between states directly dependent on the British and those with an independent pre-existence. Dependent states were those whose creation or recognition was directly due to the British, the status being defined by treaty, or who had formerly been dependent on some state

which had been annexed by the British.[1] In practice the line was by no means always easy to draw, but its existence meant that even the most radical application of the doctrine of lapse would not have involved the extinction of the whole of Hindu princely India. Nevertheless, though the distinction was a real one, Dalhousie's operation of the doctrine of lapse was sufficiently extensive to create misgivings among all Hindu princes while his actions on other pretexts extended the uneasiness to the Muslim princes as well.

The states which suffered from the process were Satara in 1848, Jaitpur and Sambalpur in 1849, Baghat in 1850, Udaipur in 1852, Jhansi in 1853, and Nagpur in 1854. The proposal to annex Karauli was disallowed by the home government. Baghat and Udaipur were restored by Lord Canning. Jaitpur was a tiny state of 165 square miles. Sambalpur was a disorderly one on the banks of the Mahanadi in what is now the state of Madhya Pradesh. The important cases were Satara, Jhansi, and Nagpur. Satara had been revived by Lord Hastings in 1818 for the benefit of Sivājī's direct descendants; it came well within the class of 'dependent' states, but its annexation irritated Maratha sentiment. Jhansi in Bundhelkhund had been dependent on the Peshwa and then on the British. The refusal to recognize the raja's last-minute adoption infuriated his high-spirited rani, who later, after some reluctance, played a prominent part in the Mutiny. Nagpur was one of the three large surviving Maratha states with a population of 4 millions. Here again the state was undeniably dependent but its annexation inevitably both irritated Maratha sentiment and injured the interests of a large governing class. In all these cases annexation was justified from Dalhousie's point of view but was a cause of deep discontent to those immediately affected and of resentment to a much wider circle.

The second plank, as it were, in Dalhousie's annexation platform was misgovernment. He regarded misgovernment as a justification for taking over states additional to the doctrine of 'lapse'; in his view the benefit of direct administration for the people at large far outweighed the evils of any injury done to an effete governing class and the resentment which it might cherish. But misgovernment alone, if sufficiently prolonged and profound, justified annexation in Dalhousie's view. This covered the case of Oudh. From the death of Saadat Ali in 1813 the state administration had steadily deteriorated, and only the obstinate loyalty of the Nawabs and Kings of Oudh (from 1818) had prevented the solemn warnings of Bentinck in 1831 and Hardinge in 1847 from going further. The Rajput *taluqdars* were undisciplined and refractory, the court extravagant, dissolute, and incompetent. Sleeman's report on its condition in 1851 painted a vivid picture of disorder and chronic misrule.[2] Dalhousie himself proposed to take

[1] Examples of the first were Tonk, Firozpur, Satara, and Mysore; of the second, Jhansi; of independent states Gwalior and the Rajput states generally.

[2] W. H. Sleeman, *Diary of a Journey through Oudh*. Dalhousie's private letters show that the directors' decision represented his real desires.

over the administration, leaving titular sovereignty with the king. But the directors overruled him, insisting on outright annexation. The taking over of the administration had much to commend it, but the manner of its achievement left Muslim princes with the same uneasy feelings as their Hindu brethren. A further case of veiled annexation increased their misgivings. In 1853 the Nizam's tardiness in paying for the Hyderabad contingent led to the assignment of the revenue of Berar for the upkeep of the force.

The third plank of the annexation platform was the abolition of titular sovereignties which Dalhousie regarded as obsolete. The title of Nawab of the Carnatic was abolished on the ground that it was a personal and not an hereditary one.[1] The titular Rajaship of Tanjore was abolished in 1855 when the last raja died without male heirs. On the death of the ex-Peshwa Baji Rao in 1853 the pension secured for him by Malcolm was refused to his adopted son, the Nana Sahib. Finally, Dalhousie wished to abolish the imperial title at Delhi. The home authorities overruled him in this, but he made the recognition of the aged Bahadur Shah's heir dependent on his agreement to forgo the imperial name and withdraw his family from the imperial palace. When heirs were lacking, Dalhousie abolished titles; when they were plentiful he made abolition a condition of recognition of family headship against rival relatives.

Apart from conquering and organizing two provinces, annexing large tracts, and abolishing the gilded survivals of the past, Dalhousie engaged in incessant reforming and constructive activity. In many ways he was the founder of modern India, for he was the first to envisage a modernized and westernized India as a practical proposition rather than as a far-off dream. Even self-government was not beyond his vision,[2] though the prospect was more distant than it was to Macaulay. He carried out the first major reorganization of the Calcutta secretariat, and obtained the appointment of a lieutenant-governor to relieve the Governor-General from the direct administration of the overgrown province of Bengal. He suppressed the old military board and set up the Public Works Department as the agent for carrying out his great programme of public works. These works comprised the extension of irrigation projects, such as the Ganges canal,[3] which had already been begun. They included a great roads programme, thereby fulfilling Bentinck's hopes, of which the most striking monument was the Grand Trunk road from Calcutta to Peshawar. Above all, Dalhousie was the father of the Indian railways. The man who worked day and night to deal with the British railway boom of the forties was well fitted to introduce railways to India. Railways for India had been discussed since 1844, but except for the sanction of certain experimental lines, caution and obstruction had hitherto been successful. It was said that

[1] The head of the family was given the title of Prince of Arcot in 1867.
[2] See W. Lee-Warner, *Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie*, vol. i, p. 124.
[3] Completed in 1854.

the climate was against them, that there were no engineers to build them, that Hindus would not travel on them and that they would not pay. Dalhousie's minute of 1853 convinced the home authorities of the need and feasibility of railways and laid down the main lines of their development. He envisaged a network connecting the main internal centres with the ports and providing both for strategical needs and commercial development. Before he left India 200 miles were in operation and had proved a success. Along with the planning of railways, which were to revolutionize Indian transport, went the introduction of the telegraph and the reform of the postal service. The first telegraph line from Calcutta to Agra, a distance of 800 miles, was opened in 1854. It was extended to Lahore and Peshawar by 1857. The postal system was reformed, a uniform half-anna rate being provided for all letters and stamps substituted for cash payments. Before his time it had cost a rupee to send a letter from Calcutta to Bombay.

Lastly, Dalhousie's rule saw great developments in education. Hitherto the Bengal government had tended to concentrate on higher and the Bombay government on primary education. The Dispatch of 1854, said to be the work of Sir Charles Wood, but which had the full support of Dalhousie, formed the basis of large developments. A fresh emphasis was laid upon primary education. At the same time the development of high schools and colleges was encouraged by the grant-in-aid system which encouraged private bodies to launch out on their own under suitable rules. The whole system was to be crowned by a number of universities, the first three of which came into existence in the year of the Mutiny. Dalhousie's special contribution was the establishment of an engineering college at Roorkee and he thus ranks as the father of technical as distinct from professional education in India.[1] There was scarcely a branch of administration, from the conserving of forests to the improvement of jails, which did not feel his reforming hand.

When we look at Dalhousie's administration as a whole we cannot fail to recognize the work of a masterly as well as a masterful mind. In some respects Dalhousie's was not an attractive personality. He seemed cold and unfeeling to some, harsh and overbearing to others; only rarely did the human warmth of a man eaten up by his passion for improvement emerge to inspire his closest confidants. He was almost morbidly sensitive to criticism and fiercely determined to dominate; he lacked imaginative sympathy with tradition and the Indian point of view. But for all that he was filled with a vision of the modern India that was to be; he exhausted his strength in the service of that India and did more, perhaps, than any single man to bring it about. Wellesley had acquired much territory and displayed singular drive and purpose but Dalhousie spent more energy in organizing than in acquiring. Bentinck had the vision of a westernized India, but while he could do little more than set up a few signposts, Dalhousie laid down the roads

[1] The Calcutta Medical College should not be forgotten in this connexion.

of progress. Curzon was a great systematizer but Dalhousie created what Curzon sought to perfect. The creative and comprehensive nature of his work surpassed that of all his nineteenth-century peers, and for a greater mind among the British rulers of India we have to go back to the most subtle and enigmatic of all, Warren Hastings. His weakness was that of going too far too fast. He was a sick man in a hurry. He was the apostle of a westernized India with all an apostle's zeal and faith. He lacked sympathetic understanding, the intuitive knowledge of how his measures would appear to those they affected. For this he paid the penalty of the Mutiny disaster, but he had also provided the antidotes of a contented Panjab, of railways, and of telegraphs.

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CHAPTER 9

The Mutiny

BOTH the nature and causes of the Mutiny are still a subject of lively dispute. It has been considered, and not only by Indian historians, as a national rising and even as 'the first war of independence'. Outram regarded it as a Muslim conspiracy exploiting Hindu grievances. It has been regarded as an aristocratic plot whose gunpowder was prematurely touched off by the spark of the Meerut outbreak. And it has been asserted to have been a purely military outbreak produced jointly by the grievances and indiscipline of the Indian troops and the folly of the British military authorities. It is in fact an anachronism to describe the Mutiny as the first essay towards modern independence. It was rather, in its political aspect, the last effort of the old conservative India. The princes had opposed the Company both with their own methods, like the Marathas, and with western military technique like Sindia and the Sikhs, and had failed. They had then retired into brooding isolation. Conservative India hoped to live its own secluded life under the princes within and British collectors outside the states, and for a few years after 1818 it seemed that it might continue undisturbed if politically impotent. But first westernization alarmed the orthodox in British India and then annexation followed the princes in their fastnesses. However negative its attitude conservative India could not escape the challenge of the West. That challenge was as inevitable as it was sincere. It was bound to cause irritation and perplexity to a community attached to an age-old system of life. It was bound to sow suspicions that the new measures were deliberately undermining the old and that they portended ruin and disgrace. The speed of the introduction of these measures after 1848 increased the irritation and created the social and political background which made it possible for military grievances to convulse a whole country. But for it the soldiers themselves would have been less fanatical. The classes which supported the troops were those who had lost something or whose interests lay in the past like the Oudh *taluqdars*, the Jhansi *sardars*, the Nana's circle, the Mughul princes, or the Maulvi of Fyzabad. The new groups, which were the product of western influence, were not only quiet but actively loyal.[1]

The factors which promoted the unrest which made a large-scale military revolt possible were many in number. There was the political factor which affected mainly the old ruling class but also Indian sentiment in general. Men, whether Hindu or Muslim, cherished their

[1] See Devendranath Tagore's autobiography.

traditional institutions and thought nominal independence a necessary part of their communal self-respect. The comfort of national self-esteem outweighed, in general sentiment, the inconveniences of local rule, even in the notorious case of Oudh. The career of expansion indulged in since 1838 made men wonder where the British would stop, and when a halt seemed to have come after the second Sikh war, the effect was spoilt by Dalhousie's annexations. These in turn alarmed the whole princely order and their dependants. Each state annexed and each court extinguished meant, perhaps, the removal of a centre of oppression and corruption. But even if this was so, it meant also further contraction of the area where Indians could hold high office, where men of good family could look forward to a career of honour in the public service. It meant also the creation of another group of resentful and perhaps desperate people who would seize any opportunity of expressing their feelings which might come their way. The Rani of Jhansi and her followers were one of these because she believed that she had been robbed of her ruling rights in defiance of recognized Hindu law. So also was the Nana Sahib at Bithur, though with far less reason, because he thought that he had a claim to the title of Peshwa and the pension of Baji Rao. Similar feelings existed in the princely circle of Delhi in anticipation of the lapse of the imperial title and the removal of the family to Mahrauli. The unease amongst the Gwalior *sardars*, which culminated in the revolt of Sindia's army, can be ascribed to the same general cause. They had no special grievance but caught the fever of unrest from events around them. The Oudh *taluqdars* saw danger to their estates as well as to their political position. The impeccable but blind Coverley Jackson fanned their fears by disbanding the royal army and starting inquiries into *taluqdari* titles.

These political fears were supplemented by the alarm felt by the whole order of large landholders, the *jagirdars* of previous days. The Permanent Settlement in Bengal had led to the displacement of many old-established *zamindari* families, but two generations had passed since the principal evictions and the new families, like the holders of Henry VIII's monastic lands under Elizabeth, were now well-established and firm supporters of the new order. But Bentinck's resumption of rent-free tenures, profitable as it was to the state and salutary in many respects, dispossessed many landholders for no other reason than loss of title deeds, and left all those affected with a sense of grievance. The *Imam* commission of the fifties was an inquiry of the same sort in the Bombay Presidency which led to the confiscation of 20,000 estates. Where would the British stop? To the fact of conquest many of them added an aggressive and superior air which could not fail to be both offensive and alarming. Their type of talk is illustrated by one of Sir Charles Napier's typical outbursts: 'Were I Emperor of India for twelve years, she should be traversed by railways and have her rivers bridged. . . . No Indian Prince should exist. The Nizam should no more be heard of. . . . Nepal would be ours. . . .'

The impact of western innovations was calculated to alarm both Hindu and Muslim religious sentiment in general and the professional religious classes in particular. Among Hindus there was an undercurrent of disapproval of such reforms as the suppression of suttee and infanticide and such innovations as the teaching of European science and medicine, the promotion of western education at the expense of oriental learning, and the introduction of railways and the telegraph. Hindu learning was publicly disparaged, Macaulay's minute on education being the most obvious example, while Christian missions were permitted and approved, if not officially countenanced. Widows were legally permitted to remarry and converts from Hinduism to inherit property. Was not this evidence of a design to subvert the ancient religion and all that made life worth while? The impalpable pressure of western ideas was making itself felt upon Hindu society as a whole.

These feelings were perhaps stronger and more widespread in Hindu than in Muslim society, but they were by no means absent from the latter as well. Muslim *maulvis* had lost their favoured position in the criminal courts. Muslims in general preferred British to Hindu rule, but only so long as tradition was respected; and they preferred their own to either. So orthodox opinion was rendered uneasy by such activities as western education and Christian missions and such innovations as railways and telegraphs just as the Hindus were. The annexation of Oudh meant the imposition of infidel rule on the faithful. Shias were outraged by the fall of the King of Oudh, and Sunnis distressed by the steady denigration of the Mughul emperor. It was no accident that one of the leaders in Oudh was the Maulvi of Fyzabad. To the Muslim orthodox Victorian reformers were but old infidels writ large.

All these factors united to spread a general disquiet through northern and central India outside Bengal. It was a foreboding of the end of the old familiar age and a fear of the unknown future. But it was no state of exasperation (save in a few isolated pockets) which only required some provocative incident to start a popular revolt. The most we can say is that it provided a social soil in which army discontent could germinate and grow. The soldiers found society in general sympathetic because society shared in a vague way the apprehensions of the soldiers themselves. The relations of the civilian to the military community was something like that of Tory rural England towards the Jacobites in 1745. They sympathized with their feelings; they half-hoped for their success, but there were too many people with too much to lose for many to stir until they knew which side fortune would favour. The soldiers on their side could feel the popular sympathy, and, like the Jacobites, counted too easily on this sympathy being expressed in action. In support of this analysis we can point to the general quietness of the countryside during the earlier stages of the Mutiny, and the apathy except in some areas like Oudh during the later. For this

divorce of action from sympathy it may be suggested that the new land settlements from the times of Munro and Elphinstone in the south and west, and of Bentinck and Bird in the north, were responsible. The peasants were passively contented, having more to lose than gain from a revolution.

There are two further points to notice. The Madras and Bombay Presidencies were hardly touched by the Mutiny, whose area of influence was the north and centre. The armies of the two presidencies were similarly almost free from the contagion. There was also little evidence of deliberate conspiracy. Sir John Lawrence held that there was none, but this can hardly be sustained in view of the established fact of circulating *chapatis* and the readiness of the Nana Sahib to seize the occasion. On the other hand there was clearly no ready-made plan in Delhi to direct a revolt when the mutineers arrived there. Two embryo and rival *rajs* were set up and there is no evidence of co-ordination between them.

We can now turn to the army. In 1857 the total military strength of the Company was 238,000 of whom 38,000 were Europeans. Each presidency had its own army and it was only that of Bengal which was seriously affected. The Bengal army numbered 151,000 of whom nearly 23,000 were Europeans. About 13,000 of these latter were in the Panjab beyond the Sutlej or in the Cis-Sutlej districts. There were hardly any European troops between Meerut and Bengal except at Dinapur near Patna. The low proportion of British troops was the result of withdrawals for the Crimean and Persian wars.

The Bengal army, unlike those of Madras and Bombay, contained a large number of high-caste men, Brahmans and Rajputs, and on that account had always been more difficult to control. Forty thousand men, or nearly one-third of the whole, came from Oudh, forming a compact interest within the army, and a large number of these were Brahmans, subject to all the current Brahman prejudices and fears. There had been no mutiny in Madras since that at Vellore in 1806 but four had occurred in the Bengal army in the previous thirteen years. The pride of the troops had been inflated by a long series of military successes, their feelings seared by the rigours of the Afghan campaigns and taunts of losing caste beyond the Indus from their down-country brethren. Discipline was undeniably lax and long before Bentinck, himself commander-in-chief as well as Governor-General, had called the Bengal army 'the most expensive and inefficient in the world'. The situation called for both firm and tactful handling, but after Napier, whose energy was mostly misplaced, there was no commander-in-chief with the perception to recognize and the weight to deal with the situation.

To this general picture may be added two particulars. In 1856 the General Service Enlistment Act required every recruit to serve wherever required instead of in India only as previously. This impinged on caste feelings about travelling overseas. And then came the

greased cartridges. The cartridges for the new Enfield rifle were said to be smeared with the fat of cows and pigs, thus nicely outraging the feelings of both Hindus, to whom the cow was sacred, and Muslims, to whom the pig was unclean.[1] The story spread like wildfire and was denied vigorously and in good faith by the officers. But animal fat had in fact been used in the Woolwich arsenal, so that the denial only confirmed the Hindu soldiers' belief that some plot was afoot. The withdrawal of the cartridges on the discovery of the facts came too late to allay suspicion and indignation for it was thought to be only a sign of weakness and alarm at the unmasking of a nefarious design. Had the general atmosphere been calm and unruffled no general outbreak would have occurred. But it was brooding, anxious, and suspicious. Here, said the soldiers, is concrete confirmation of so much we have vaguely heard talked about. No doubt their feelings were exploited by interested parties, but it was the feelings themselves which finally convulsed them in desperate action.

Dalhousie retired in February 1856 believing that he had restored India to that unruffled tranquillity in which he had expected to find her eight years earlier. Lord Canning, his successor, was the son of the brilliant lieutenant of Pitt and later Foreign Secretary, and had been Postmaster-General in the Aberdeen and Palmerston ministries. He had the high-mindedness of his father without his brilliance, his industry without his restless ambition and sudden intuitions. He was judicial in temper and diffident in decision. But if slow in coming to conclusions he was firm in holding them and he possessed a reserve of moral strength which eventually infused and dominated his whole character. His reflective nature invited criticism in times demanding quick decisions which his moral courage enabled him to resist; his detached temper both enraged men who were carried away by passion and enabled him to pursue his solitary path to the end. His nickname of 'Clemency' was a title first of derision and finally of honour. 'If he lacked the daring resolution', says Roberts, 'the imperious will, and the personal force of Dalhousie, he displayed a splendid constancy under taunts and misrepresentation, and he possessed a curious power of detaching himself from the influence and passions of the moment in solving intricate problems.'[2]

Canning's first care was a Persian crisis. In 1856 the Persians occupied Herat, then controlled by Dost Muhammad. Afghanistan was now a friendly power and a force was accordingly sent to the Persian Gulf which induced the Persians to make peace and evacuate Herat in May. This incident was of importance because it cemented Indo-Afghan friendship and helped to secure Afghan neutrality in the crisis which shortly followed. Canning's next care was affairs in Oudh, where

[1] The cartridges were smeared by grease and had to be bitten off before insertion into the rifle. The order to bite was rescinded and the men were allowed to provide their own grease.

[2] P. E. Roberts, *History of British India*, 3rd ed., p. 359.

the proceedings of Outram's successor as Chief Commissioner, Coverley Jackson, were causing increasing unrest. Jackson was replaced by Sir Henry Lawrence in March 1857, too late to prevent but in time to ensure the defeat of the outbreak in Oudh.

From the beginning of 1857 military unrest was clearly increasing. In January the cartridges (which had not now to be bitten and for which the men provided their own grease) were refused at Dumdum near Calcutta. In March a regiment was disbanded at Barrackpur. Outbreaks of incendiarism occurred and rumours flew. The actual outbreak occurred on 10 May at Meerut. Some troops refused the cartridges and were placed in irons. Their comrades of three regiments released them during service time on a Sunday evening, shot their officers, and made off for Delhi although there were over 2,000 European troops at Meerut. Delhi had no European troops. The Indian garrison joined the mutineers; the city was seized and by nightfall the aged Emperor Bahadur Shah had become their reluctant and bewildered leader.[1]

The course of the Mutiny falls into three periods. The first covers the terrible summer of 1857 when the problem was to prevent the conflagration from spreading and to hold on until reinforcements could arrive. The second centres round the operations for the relief of Lucknow in the autumn of the year. The third saw the set campaigns of Sir Colin Campbell and Sir Hugh Rose in the first part of 1858 which finally broke the rebel strength. There was a final phase of 'mopping up' operations which may be said to have ended with the capture of Tantia Topi in April 1859. It was a time of heroic constancy and great courage on the part of the government forces, who were never entirely British, and of equally desperate but ill-regulated valour on the part of the mutineers. Dark deeds were done on both sides, on the one side in the abandon of the release of long-suppressed passions, on the other in the rage of reprisal and blind vengeance. No good purpose would be served by detailing horrors on either side. It is sufficient for our purpose to say that the best men on either side were above them, that they were regretted by all when the fever of hate and fear had abated, and that their memory on both sides long remained a living obstacle to the restoration of harmonious relations.

A pause occurred after the fall of Delhi on 11 May while the commander-in-chief, General Anson, was collecting troops and transport at Ambala. Before his force could reach Delhi, the troops at Nasirabad in Rajputana, Nimach in Gwalior, at Lucknow, Cawnpore, and Benares in the United Provinces, rose together with the Rani of Jhansi in Bundelkhand. Everywhere officers were shot and Europeans massacred; everywhere vacillation as to the next step and lack of ready-made leaders showed the absence of well-planned conspiracies. Only in Cawnpore and Jhansi did the Nana Sahib and the Rani provide any immediate and aristocratic leadership. By mid-June therefore

[1] He was eighty-two years of age.

British authority had practically ceased in a broad band of territory stretching from the borders of Rajputana to the neighbourhood of Patna in Bihar. Only the fort of Agra, the residency of Lucknow, and entrenchments at Cawnpore were held while a mobile force was on its way from Ambala to Delhi. For the rest the countryside waited on the course of events without displaying any marked leanings to either side. The British had, as it were, two bastions of strength, in the Panjab and in Bengal. The problem was to hold these, to rescue the beleaguered garrisons, and to prevent the spread of the movement until reinforcements could arrive from Europe. In Bengal there was no danger; in the Panjab the situation was saved by the iron nerve of Sir John Lawrence and his picked team of enterprising officers. Here there was the triple danger of Afghan interference, of a Sikh rising, and of sepoy mutiny. Dost Muhammad remained loyal to his treaties, a delayed effect of his respect for British arms acquired in the first Afghan war. The Sikhs remained quiet and indeed actively helped in the operations. They had nothing to gain from a revival of the Mughul power at Delhi; for them the memory of Aurangzeb and his immediate successors was even more bitter than that of Dalhousie. The measures of the new government had also contented many more than it had alienated. The sepoy danger was met by prompt disarming and the way cleared for the organization of a mobile column under the redoubtable John Nicholson.

From the moment of hearing the news of the capture of Delhi both Canning and Lawrence realized that there lay the key to victory. Its recovery was a vital preliminary to the crushing of the revolt. The prestige of the old empire, with its Hindu as well as Muslim affiliations, made Delhi a rallying-point for all. Many in India still considered the titular emperor to be the rightful sovereign of the country and his nominal headship of the movement laid a strain upon all classes as well as upon Muslim princes in particular. General Anson at once organized a force which established itself on the Ridge before Delhi in late June.[1] But it was too weak to storm the city and for a time was more besieged than besieging. During July and August the force maintained itself with desperate valour and increasing confidence while Lawrence secured himself in the Panjab and then took the hazard of sending Nicholson, followed by a siege train, to Delhi. The nature of the hazard can be judged from the fact that Lawrence at one time thought of abandoning Peshawar and was only restrained by the entreaties of Herbert Edwardes and the command of Canning. In September the city was assaulted and carried after six days of desperate street fighting. Bahadur Shah surrendered on the promise of his life and the mutineer forces, about 30,000 strong, scattered to the villages or made their way down country to Lucknow. Nearly a quarter of the British force

[1] General Anson died of cholera at Karnal, and his successor Barnard soon followed him on 5 July. Reed resigned through ill-health and the command devolved on Sir Archdale Wilson.

became casualties and Nicholson was killed. But the traditional capital had been recovered by the men on the spot without the aid of a man from overseas. From that moment the suppression of the Mutiny as a whole was only a matter of time. The largely innocent inhabitants of Delhi, to whom the advent of the mutineers had been as much a calamity as the Marathas and Afghans before them, suffered acutely in the reprisals and punitive measures which followed.

But this result could not have been achieved if large rebel forces had not been tied up in and around Lucknow. Here the second epic of resistance against huge odds was enacted. Wheeler at Cawnpore surrendered on 26 June after three weeks of gallant resistance. Nana Sahib stained his own and the Maratha name by breaking his word and murdering his prisoners including 125 women and children. At Lucknow Sir Henry Lawrence was besieged in the residency from 1 July and died of his wounds three days later. But his work lived after him. His spirit inspired the garrison and his wise measures enabled it to resist until relief came. On 11 June the fortress of Allahabad was secured by Neill, a man cast in the mould of Nicholson, but who dimmed his glory by deeds of dark vengeance. On 7 July General Havelock set out from Allahabad with 2,000 men to achieve the first relief of Lucknow. He reached Cawnpore to find the prisoners murdered by the Nana's orders in a fury of frustration. In twelve pitched battles between 7 July and 25 September he fought his way into the residency. The back of the Mutiny had been broken before any reinforcements from Britain could reach the scene of action.

But the revolt was by no means over and much greater efforts were needed before the mutineers, rendered desperate by the prospect of defeat and condign punishment, were finally scattered. The second phase consisted in the second relief of the Lucknow residency. The relieved garrison, now commanded by Outram, was still too weak to attack Lucknow and was again besieged. In November Sir Colin Campbell finally relieved the residency and then returned to defeat the Gwalior contingent of 20,000 men under Tantia Topi, who had hitherto remained inert at Kalpi. On 1 March, joining forces with Outram, he recovered Lucknow and pressed the remnants of the rebel forces back into the Terai bordering Nepal.[1] Nana Sahib went with them and disappeared in the border jungles.

The third phase was the central Indian campaign. In many ways it showed the mutineers at their best though their cause was by then hopeless. The reckless courage of the rani and the skill of Tantia relieved the gloom of a hopeless struggle in a discredited cause. In March 1858 Sir Hugh Rose captured Jhansi after defeating Tantia's relieving force. The struggle seemed over with the victory of Kunch in May when the rani and Tantia doubled back to Gwalior, won over

[1] This phase was prolonged by Canning's proclamation forfeiting the *aluqdars'* lands except for six specifically mentioned and others who could prove their loyalty. Many then rose and maintained a guerrilla resistance for many months.

the raja's personal forces, and seized the fortress-capital. Two more battles were needed to break up this force in one of which the rani in a soldier's dress met a soldier's end. With the fall of Gwalior on 20 June the Mutiny was virtually over and there only remained minor operations.[1] Canning proclaimed peace on 8 July 1858.

It must always remain an object of wonder that forces so small should defeat opponents so numerous animated by such desperate courage in so short a time. But in fact the forces arrayed on each side were not so unevenly balanced as appeared at first sight. While at first the balance of material factors weighed heavily on the side of the rebels, the balance of moral factors lay equally clearly on the side of the British. They only needed time to convert their moral assets into material terms, and this their determination and confidence in themselves, no less than their courage, enabled them to do. The passions of the mutineers were centred on their grievances, not on larger ideals. They knew what they disliked, but not what they would wish to set up in its stead. So they gained little advantage from successes and nothing but despair from their defeats. Their resistance was made desperate by the knowledge that they had burnt their boats, that they had committed the unforgivable military sin. However courageous their resistance it was therefore despairing rather than purposeful. They fought to the end, because there was nothing to make them fight another day, and because the chance of death from surrender was equal to that from continued battle. Where the populace joined in, as round Saharanpur and Bareilly, it was on account of particular grievances rather than from any large vision of a new India. Those who had any such vision, as had some Muslims and the Nana Sahib's circle, looked backwards rather than forwards with the result that their programmes clashed. The British, on the other hand, enjoyed gifted and determined leadership; they had a compact discipline based upon a robust national pride. They had a long record of success and the hope of reinforcements to sustain them, and above all they had abounding self-confidence springing from the belief that they represented the irresistible forces of progress in the modern world. Seen in this light the result is not so difficult to understand. The pity of it was that the issue should have been put to the test of battle, to be decided at the cost of so much blood, and of the flowing of so many tears.

In the summer of 1858 northern India lay inert and lacerated. The wisdom of Canning and the strength of men like Sir John Lawrence restrained and soon ended the punitive measures and clamours for vengeance which followed the wake of the armies. But much remained to be done. Most of the rebel leaders were killed in battle like the Rani of Jhansi, or disappeared like the Nana and Bakht Khan of Delhi, or were executed like Tantia Topi. The Emperor Bahadur Shah had been promised his life. After a trial of doubtful legality he was exiled

[1] Tantia Topi was betrayed in April 1859 and hung for complicity in the Cawnpore massacre.

to Rangoon where he died in 1862 at the age of eighty-seven. The Mughul family lost its royal status. Delhi and Lucknow slowly returned to a normal life, but Delhi with its territory lost its semi-independent position and was attached to the Panjab. A number of implicated princelings lost their states and their lives. In Oudh Canning's confiscatory proclamation was not withdrawn, but its application was left to the discretion of the new Chief Commissioner Montgomery, and its rigour mitigated by a system of regrants.

These were the immediate and local results; there followed a number of measures of great importance. The East India Company ended its long career as the ruling power in India; a new attitude was adopted towards the princes; the army was reorganized; a beginning was made in associating Indians with the supreme government of their country. The new age was ushered in and its intended spirit defined in the Queen's proclamation of 1 November 1858. If good can come out of evil the Mutiny can claim the credit for most of these measures. There remained the psychological gulf between the peoples of India and Britain. This gulf was not created by the Mutiny as we have seen. The forces of separation had outstripped those making for harmony in the previous twenty years. The spirit of superiority and social pride had surpassed that of co-operation and the hope of self-government. This spirit was reinforced by that of fear on the British side and the resentment which it aroused was deepened by the memory of defeat and vengeance on the Indian. In this sense the Mutiny was a calamity whose effects only time could heal. Happily the progressive forces of reform and co-operation were not consumed but only obscured by the smoke of passion. They had received a severe set-back, but the next fifty years showed that it was a check rather than a final halt.

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BOOK III

Imperial India, 1858–1905

CHAPTER 1

Canning and Reorganization

AFTER the Mutiny came reorganization. The first of these measures was the abolition of the East India Company. Since 1833, as we have seen,[1] the Company had lost its commercial connexion with India. From 1853 it had ceased to be a commercial corporation at all with the ending of its China trade. Six of its directors were actually nominated by the home government and the directors' monopoly of appointments had been broken by the introduction of competitive examinations. The Company had already become a husk of its former self. It was in fact a corporate agency to whom the local management of affairs in India was entrusted. It had little influence on high policy and its last convulsive assertion of authority went back to the recall of Lord Ellenborough. The justification of its continued existence, so far as it had one, was in supplying local knowledge for the benefit of the President of the Board of Control, and in keeping the details of Indian administration and patronage from the contagion of party politics. For all that, it had become an anomaly, and public anomalies are apt only to continue so long as no special occasion arises to prompt review and reform. The Company itself argued ably in its own favour through the pen of John Stuart Mill, but the current of opinion was against it.

The Government of India Act of 1858 deprived the Company of the Indian government.[2] The place of the President of the Board of Control was taken by a Secretary of State for India, who now became, in subordination to the cabinet, the fountain of authority as well as the director of policy in India. To supply the local knowledge which the directors claimed to give a Council of India was set up. This consisted of fifteen members, appointed at first for life but later for periods of between ten and fifteen years. Eight members were appointed by the Crown and seven at first by the directors and afterwards by co-option by the council itself. This body tended to represent official experience

[1] Book II, Chapter 6.

[2] The Company itself was formally dissolved from 1 Jan. 1874 by Act of Parliament.

and since the members were usually men who had retired from a lifetime of service in India, embodied the official experience of the past generation. At first this fact provided a useful link between past and present, but when India really began to move forward in the latter years of the century, it became a handicap. It meant that the Secretary of State's immediate advisers were not in a position to judge accurately the new currents of opinion because they had arisen or developed since their time. Initially, however, the change was to the good; the influence of British 'interests' in British-Indian counsels was reduced, and the weight of administrative experience increased. A man no longer had influence in the direction of Indian affairs through the accident of having inherited business connexions with India or even Company stock, or because he was himself a successful trader with the country.

The arguments urged in favour of the Company as a ruler in its commercially disembodied form as an administrative corporation were that its long tradition and family spirit held the loyalty of its servants as an impersonal Crown could never do; that detailed superintendence by the directors ensured that due regard would be paid to local circumstances, essential in a place like India, and that the directors' control of patronage kept the administration above the welter of party politics and jobbery. All these arguments had at one time had force, but the cogency of each had grown less with time. The Crown was certainly less personal than the Company and under the Hanoverians the loss by transfer would have been a severe one. But India was now a subject of continuous attention in the governing circle in London; the best men were sent to India not exceptionally as in the case of Cornwallis but as a matter of course. The Crown itself, in the person of Queen Victoria, took an interest in Indian affairs more personal than that of most directors, and she contrived to convey that interest, in some almost magic way, both to her civil and military servants and to the people of India at large. As for the family spirit of the old days, a blow had already been struck by the introduction of the competition system. The change checked a certain tendency to turn the Indian services into a closed caste circle, which lost in enterprise and originality what it gained in fraternalism. The old families were not excluded by the new system, but only their less capable members.

The argument of the local knowledge of the directors was met by the institution of the India Council which has been already discussed. The contention that the existence of the Company kept Indian affairs out of the bounds of party politics had once had great force. When jobbery was the rule in British politics, it was bound to extend to India if politicians controlled jobs. But jobbery was no longer the rule in British politics, whose tone had been transformed during the previous fifty years. The directors themselves were not guiltless in the matter of jobs. As for day-to-day interference it was now generally realized that too much was at stake in India for irresponsible meddling to be tolerated by either party.

Looking at the transfer as a whole we may agree that the change involved some loss of personal feeling, of the informality and intimacy which lingered round the East India House. But this was more than compensated by the more forward-looking spirit which pervaded the new India Office. The relics of commercialism and the ledger-book attitude to which directors clung to the last disappeared for ever. The nostalgic tendency to envisage Indian government as mere tax collecting and police work with its reluctance to embark on new ventures was also swept aside. The government as a whole was now consciously looking forward to a modernized India, not unconsciously harking back to a Mughul tranquillity, and the people became aware, as they had not been before, that their welfare was the concern of the rulers over the water. The royal courts and the royal law had once been the terror of the Bengali; the person and declarations of the new queen were to become the focus of Indian loyalty and the fountain of Indian hope.

We now turn to India, where Canning continued to hold the reins of power for four more years. Canning was industrious, deliberate, and reflective; he lacked the executive force of Dalhousie or Wellesley or the deeper insight of Warren Hastings. But his lack of brilliance was compensated by integrity and his slowness by tenacity; above all he possessed a high seriousness which imparted to his government a moral quality which was all his own. He was not at his best at the onset of the Mutiny because his qualities did not match the precise needs of the hour. He was firm and tenacious rather than bold or inspiring. But the initial crisis surmounted, his stature steadily grew as his strongest qualities were increasingly called forth by the course of events. The tenacious resister, the patient planner, the far-sighted conciliator increasingly came into his own. No one was better fitted to restrain the inflamed passions of his countrymen or to convince the Indian countryside that defeat was not to be synonymous with vengeance. Looked at in the cool light of posterity, many governmental acts of the time still seem severe; it is only by remembering the heat of the passions aroused that the extent of both Canning's and Lawrence's achievements can be measured. Their work and their difficulties are sufficiently attested by their private correspondence. Canning was awarded his nickname of 'Clemency' in Calcutta in disgust at his stand against vengeance; the intended insult, as such things so often do, became his recognized title of honour.

Canning's refusal to countenance indiscriminate vengeance was as noble and far-sighted as it was difficult. But in Oudh a certain fatality dogged his steps. His Oudh proclamation of March 1858 was interpreted by the *taluqdars* as an act of general confiscation; they thereupon took to arms and prolonged guerrilla warfare until the end of the year. The incident ended Lord Ellenborough's last tenure of the Presidency of the Board of Control.[1] Canning characteristically retrieved his

[1] Lord Ellenborough condemned the proclamation in a public dispatch without consulting the cabinet.

mistake, not by withdrawing the proclamation, but by entrusting its enforcement to Sir Henry Montgomery as Commissioner of Oudh. As a result of his tactful suasion and with the help of regrants, most of the chiefs recovered their estates on submission. For India as a whole the Queen's proclamation of 1 November 1858 set the tone for the new era of authority and conciliation, of piety and benevolence. Mercy and justice, welfare and improvement now took their stand on the royal word.

In India the change from Company to Crown was largely a matter of nomenclature. The machine continued to work in much the same way and the same men continued to work it. Administrative changes at the centre were nevertheless considerable and changes of policy were still more significant. In every measure the touchstone was how to avoid the mistakes which had led to the catastrophe. In this natural anxiety to discover and rectify errors can be perceived the tendency, so common at such periods, to forget the needs of the present in remedying the failures of the past. Thus the government thought more of quieting the old classes of the society than of attaching the new and rising elements to itself. The loyalty of these groups had been signal and it was now assumed as an axiom until subsequent neglect goaded them into discontent.

For the moment, however, the new measures seemed conciliatory and wise. The Governor-General retained his legal title, but added the honorific of Viceroy as the personal representative of the Crown. There was here gain in intimacy as well as of pomp, for the Governor-General was henceforth the personal representative of the sovereign rather than the temporary figurehead of an impersonal corporation. At first it was proposed to make the Governor-General a supreme bureaucrat served by secretaries. But wiser counsels prevailed. By the Indian Councils Act of 1861 the Executive Council was retained and expanded to contain a fifth ordinary member in addition to the commander-in-chief, who continued to sit as an extraordinary member but rarely attended. To this council was introduced the 'portfolio' system whereby members were placed in charge of specific departments instead of sitting as a board of consultants to discuss each question as it came up on its merits. Business ordinarily went from the members to the Viceroy and only matters of general import or in doubt or dispute were referred to the council as a whole. Much time and effort were thus saved and the shape of the central government began to assume its modern form. The system also permitted the appointment of experts for specific subjects such as finance. The Governor-General's position as head of a cabinet of departmental chiefs began to approach somewhat to that of a prime minister. But since he retained his overriding powers it more nearly conformed to that of an American president unhampered by an independent legislature.

The Legislative Council of 1853 was substantially modified. The two judges and four provincial representatives who had formed under Dal-

housie a kind of toy Parliament, modelling its procedure and spirit on that of Westminster, were replaced by from six to twelve additional members nominated for two years by the Governor-General, at least one-half being non-officials. No rule was laid down for their selection but in practice Dalhousie's desire to secure Indian representation was achieved by this means. At the same time the powers of the council, which Canning had found to be inconveniently independent,[1] were confined to the consideration of measures specifically laid before them. It was thus hoped to reduce the isolation of the supreme government from the people while removing a spurious parliamentary opposition in the guise of judges and provincial officials. At the same time legislative powers were restored to Madras and Bombay for provincial purposes.

The next subject of reconstruction was finance. The government of India's finances had hitherto been jointly controlled by the Governor-General and his council. But the Mutiny, by cutting off some sources of revenue and imposing new expenses, had added £42 million to the Indian debt to make a total of £98 million. In 1859–60 there was a deficit of over £7 million. India was steadily passing from the old self-contained rural economy of Mughul times into the orbit of world economic forces. Something more was needed than the old rule of thumb methods and the principles of Micawber finance. The new place on the Viceroy's Council was filled by the appointment of the financier James Wilson in 1859. In the nine months between his arrival in Calcutta and his death he remodelled the system of financial administration, outlined important economies, imposed an income tax for five years, and introduced the practice of annual budgets and statements of accounts. His work, as completed by his successor Samuel Laing, included a uniform tariff of 10 per cent., a convertible paper currency, and additions to the salt duty. Against previous belief Laing, taking into account the great productive assets of the country, maintained that 'the revenue of India is really buoyant and elastic to an extraordinary degree', an opinion justified by later experience. By these means and helped by good seasons the annual deficit disappeared in 1864. The work of Wilson and Laing marks the beginning of modern Indian finance.

Land was the next object of attention. The lot of the cultivators of Bengal under the Permanent Settlement had long been an object of concern. The settlement had given the value both of the unearned increment of the land and of increased cultivation to the *zamindars*, and it had made the cultivators in effect their tenants-at-will.[2] In 1859 an attempt was made to remedy this with the Bengal Rent Act. The Act applied to the whole of the north-west[3] as well as Bengal proper,

1 The judges were held to be the chief offenders in this respect.

2 The Court of Directors declared in 1858: 'The rights of the Bengal ryots had passed away *sub silentio* and they had become, to all intents and purposes, tenants-at-will'.

3 Except the Panjab and Oudh.

gave occupancy rights to all cultivators who could prove possession for twelve years, and limited the raising of rents. The Act was far from a complete success and instigated much litigation; but if it is too much to describe it as a peasant's Magna Carta, it at least proved a landmark in protecting cultivators from the vagaries of the great *zamindars* and *taluqdars*. A further question was then mooted, nothing less than the extension of the Permanent Settlement from Bengal and parts of Madras and the North-West Provinces to the whole of India. It was believed that the cultivators of the great estates were now protected by the new Rent Act; elsewhere permanency would give to peasants settled under the *ryotwari* and village systems the whole value of unearned increment and of increased cultivation. It was argued that famine mortality was connected with the system of temporary settlements with its danger of over-assessment. Were not the peasants left with too small a margin to have a reserve for bad times? The view won impressive support, including Sir Bartle Frere and Samuel Laing in India and Sir John Lawrence at home, and was actually accepted in principle by Sir Charles Wood in 1862. But its enforcement was first shelved and then finally abandoned. The greater efficiency of settlement operations and the partial nature of the success of the Bengal Rent Act combined to raise doubts sufficiently potent to arrest action. The real solution of the famine problem was to come later.

After the problem of a contented peasantry came that of discontented princes. Had not the uneasiness caused by the strict application of the doctrine of lapse and the series of annexations been at least a contributory cause of the Mutiny? On the other hand the loyalty of the Nizam and his minister Sir Salar Jung, of Sindia and his minister Sir Dinkar Rao, of the Rajput and Sikh chiefs had proved of the highest value. Loyal chiefs were rewarded by titles and gifts of money or lands. But far more important was the new policy which was now formulated. Canning had described the princes as the 'breakwaters of the storm which would otherwise have swept over us in one great wave'. Henceforward they were to be regarded as subordinate partners rather than dependent chiefs awaiting extinction or autonomous rulers cut off from the main stream of Indian life. The first step in the new policy was the assumption of sovereignty by the Crown. All states were now to be subject to royal paramountcy as in Mughul times. The new link was more definite and more personal than the Company's vague assertion of an impersonal supremacy. Two implications were contained in this step. First, as integral parts of the empire they were to be cherished rather than ignored with a bias to extinction. Their territories were guaranteed and the right of adoption conceded. Secondly, paramountcy carried with it the right of interference. The cherisher of princes could insist on good behaviour in a way that the Company with its aloof disdain could not. The influence of the resident was now actively exercised in promoting good government. Princely maladministration became an imperial concern as it had not generally

been before to be visited, not by annexation but by periods of British administration. Princes were encouraged to interest themselves in affairs around them and to throw their states open to western influences by such measures as the building of roads and railways and the promotion of education and modern industries. A first step was thus taken in the integration of princely British-India; if the process appeared to halt half-way after a promising beginning it was not the fault of the beginning itself. From being a collection of isolated potentates the princes became an order with a stake in the new régime.

The Bengal army had to be reorganized from the bottom. Some 120,000 out of 128,000 Indians in the Bengal army had been involved in the Mutiny and had been killed or scattered. There were left eleven regiments which had not mutinied, some remnants of others, some irregular corps, and the Company's European troops, which numbered about 16,000. The Bengal army had thus virtually disappeared. On the other hand the form of organization in three presidency armies had helped to prevent the spread of the mutiny to the south, because each army had developed its own traditions and *esprit de corps*. Questions of caste did not weigh heavily with the Bombay sepoy and the outlook of the Madrasi was quite different to that of the up-country Brahman. The existing form of organization into three presidency armies was therefore retained, in spite of its anomaly in a centrally organized India. It was not until 1895 that the three forces became the unified Indian army under a single commander-in-chief, separate 'commands' replacing the old independent 'armies'.

The first problem of reorganization was the fate of the Company's European troops. With the passing of the Company's rule they automatically passed under the Crown. They need not, for that reason, have been disbanded, and Canning desired to retain a local European army. But he was overruled by the home government which decided on complete amalgamation. All ranks were offered service on the new terms, but these aroused discontent because many men had acquired domestic ties in India which transfer to England might break and the officers thought they would not be so well off in the royal regiments. What was rather imaginatively termed the last white mutiny was allayed by the grant of bounties to the 10,000 men who took their discharge and the offer of service with Indian regiments to the officers.

The Indian portion was re-formed on new principles. Before the Mutiny there had been about 238,000 Indian troops to 45,000 Europeans in all three presidencies. The proportion of Indian to European was now fixed at fifty-fifty in the Bengal army and two to one in the other two. When the reorganization was complete in 1863 the Indian troops numbered 140,000 and the Europeans 65,000. The spirit of caution was further shown by the disbandment of the Indian artillery (except for a few mountain batteries) which had proved so formidable in the hands of the mutineers. There were those who advocated a return of the 'mixed' system of regiments in use in the eighteenth

century, whereby each regiment contained men of all classes. But neither the spirit of tradition or prophecy prevailed; instead the 'class' system of community regiments was adopted and lasted for the rest of the period. Two Indian battalions were brigaded with one European so that no important station would be without its European complement of troops. As before Indian regiments continued to be officered by Europeans. A change was also made in the proportion of classes recruited. The number of Rajputs and Brahmans from the United Provinces was reduced and that of Gurkhas, Sikhs, and Panjabis increased. This process was extended later in favour of the martial races of the north-west and in preference to those in the south. From 1893 Pathan, Sikh, and Panjabi units were increased at the expense of the south; by 1910 only thirteen battalions were recruited from the Madras Presidency.[1] There was no need, it is true, to maintain large forces in the south and northerners were better fitted to defend the northern passes. The effect was to make the army less representative in its composition, if not less national, and to emphasize both its professional aloofness from the life of the country and the martial character of the Panjab.

The Mutiny crisis necessarily brought to a halt the programme of social and material improvement which Dalhousie had pursued so energetically. But it was only for a moment and there was no more basis in Canning's time for John Bright's description in 1862 of British rule as 'a hundred years of crime against the docile natives of India' than there had been from the time of Lord William Bentinck onwards. The development of education as a result of Sir Charles Wood's dispatch of 1854 went forward with hardly a break. The first three Indian universities of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay were founded while the Mutiny was actually in progress, and the rapid expansion of private colleges as a result of the grant-in-aid system began soon after. Public works, which added to the security of the country, had immediate priority and of these railways were the chief. There is no doubt that the great expansion in railway construction in the sixties was directly stimulated by the crisis and as such was one of its main compensations. The railway network has proved to be the nervous system of modern India. In 1859 and 1860 disturbances between European indigo planters and the Bengal peasants enabled Canning with home support to correct a system by which the cultivator was often compelled to grow indigo against both his will and his interests. By his efforts to organize relief during the north Indian famine of 1861 Canning foreshadowed the later development of the great Famine Code. The mortality of the most affected districts was estimated at less than 10 per cent. instead of the third or half of the population in the great famines of the eighteenth century. Finally the great law reform, which had been in progress since the passing of the Charter Act of 1833, reached completion. The Penal Code, the work of the Law Commission commenced

[1] In 1857 the number was 41.

under the lead of Macaulay, was enacted in 1860 and was followed by the Code of Criminal Procedure in the following year. Along with some reorganization of the law courts and the judges, a proportion of whom were to be members of the Indian civil service,[1] these codes form the basis of the Indian legal system today.

For all his lack of brilliance and periodical misjudgements, Canning not only weathered the storm of the Mutiny but achieved the even more difficult feat of weathering the peace. Along with John Lawrence he did more than anyone to reconcile the Indian people with the government and to convince them that welfare and not vengeance or police rule was its larger aim. His resolute stand against Calcutta cries for vengeance and his disregard of abuse gave to Indian eyes in Lord Elgin's words 'to acts which carried justice to the verge of severity the grace of clemency'. In the abstract and in the light of after events Canning could have well been more clement, but in the setting of his times his actions marked high moral courage and great tenacity of purpose. The administration was reorganized and tentative steps taken to bring it into closer touch with the people. The princes were rewarded, reconciled, and reassured as to their future. Only in the case of the new class of westernized Indian was nothing done to mark their loyalty by associating them more closely with the administration which had called them into existence and with whose future their fortunes were linked. Their attachment was taken for granted and they were in fact hardly thought of. But as in the case of the liberals and nationalists at the Vienna settlement it was with them that the future lay. The new government had restored the situation; its motto may be described as one of paternal efficiency. But every restoration conceals some change. In this case the change was one from the dynamic view looking to eventual self-government by a westernized India prevalent in the thirties, to a static view of watchful and solicitous parental care without any large hope of development. Material progress there was to be, and there was never an explicit denial of the larger aim. But there was an implicit understanding that self-government was a matter for future ages if at all. Even Dalhousie had cherished the earlier ideal, but the British now settled down to an imperial stewardship amongst an inexplicable people which was not to experience its first doubts until the eighties or to be seriously modified until the first World War had come upon them. The pride of achievement remained but the hope of Indian freedom lay dormant.

AUTHORITIES

For Canning himself there is only H. S. Cunningham's little book at present. It is hoped that a work based on his private papers may soon be forthcoming. For concise treatment of reorganization the *Cambridge History of India*, vol. vi, which is strong on the administrative side, may be consulted in chaps. xi, xii, xix-xxii. The *Gazetteer of India*, vols. iii and iv, are also useful. The constitutional side is dealt

[1] By the Indian High Courts Act of 1861.

with by Sir C. ILBERT, *The Government of India, a Historical Survey* (1922) and A. BERRIEDALE KEITH, *Constitutional History of India* (1937). Mill's defence of the East India Company will be found in the *Parliamentary Papers* for 1857–8, vol. xliii. He also deals with the subject in his *Responsible Government* (ed. Oxford 1946). See also A. WEST, *Sir Charles Wood's Administration . . . 1859–66* (1867) and Sir J. STRACHEY, *India, its administration* (1911).

RECENT PUBLICATION

M. MACLAGAN's *Clemency Canning* (1962) is again valuable.

CHAPTER 2

The Political Thread—Elgin to Elgin

THE period between the retirement of Lord Canning and that of Lord Curzon is usually regarded as the high noon of the British imperial power in India. There is much truth in this view for thereafter its power was never wholly uncontested or its prospects unclouded. For the first half of the period British rule was not even questioned. The old states had passed into obscurity, the old order had made its passionate convulsive protest and lay inert and resourceless; the new order beginning to emerge was recognized by only a few discerning spirits and its significance under-estimated by many of them. There was no one left to offer a serious challenge to the British power and the British were now on their guard against provoking fresh outbursts of wounded popular sentiment. Efficiency and order, benevolence and development, were the keynotes of the first half of the period. The politics of the north-west, the control of the frontiers, the development of welfare measures like education, irrigation, and prevention of famine were the topics of the day. The apotheosis of this period was the proclamation of the queen as Empress of India in 1876. Yet what the British power gained in stability and pomp it was losing in organic vitality and purpose. The government of India was increasingly regarded as a white man's burden rather than as a call to creative effort or the preparation for a new era. The exhilaration which Wellesley's young men had experienced in setting in order previously unknown and desolated regions and the sober but large hopes of these same men in later life had faded, and so had the rather naïve expectations of the reformers of Bentinck's time. The pride of conquest which had succeeded in the forties had led to disillusionment; the moral earnestness of the Panjab school was fortified by duty rather than by hope. India had not responded to the magic wand from the West; the thought of any response on a large scale was relegated to the distant and incalculable future. By 1880 Lord Northbrook, a very cautious Whig, could complain that hardly anyone in India could bring himself to believe any Indian to be capable of responsibility. Twenty-five years before Dalhousie himself was proposing the appointment of an Indian as one of the new legislative councillors. With vision and hope laid aside there remained the task of keeping order and dealing justice, of devising improving measures and exercising fostering care. In many ways it was a satisfying work, but it lacked the inspiring and exciting flavours of earlier periods and it bred a different type of official. Thus the sixties and seventies, though prosperous and materially creative, were spiritually somewhat barren.

In the second half of the period, though the same general conditions prevailed, there was a perceptible change in the atmosphere. Democratic liberalism had received a fresh impetus from the radicalism of Chamberlain and the moral fervour of Gladstone. Conscience and political principle united to direct fresh attention to India and revive almost forgotten dreams of political freedom. But while this new current of thought existed and made its impact on India before 1900 it was a minority opinion in both countries. Gladstonian liberalism went into eclipse for twenty years with the defeat of home rule and the new ideas had not more than a scanty following amongst officials in India itself. The viceregal backing which obtained under Bentinck was lacking except for a time under Ripon, and there was never a 'pressure group' of young civilians such as that constituted by Charles Trevelyan, Macaulay, and their friends.

It is important to remember that the close connexion between English thought and action in India not only continued but was strengthened during this period. With the closing of Haileybury College there was less community of outlook amongst the young civilians actually coming to the country. But there was a tighter control of policy at the top, and a quicker transmission of ideas. The telegraph was nearly as fatal to the independence of the Viceroy as it was to the prospects of the mutineers. No Dalhousie could annex a Panjab again without reference to the home authorities on the plea of the necessity for a quick decision. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 quickened the flow of ideas both by enabling literature to move more freely to India and by encouraging Europeans to more frequent resort to India. Thus the influence of English ideas continued to be the main factor in the formation of basic policy with the difference that local experience on the whole was less powerful to modify or to hinder. The influence of English ideas of property was revealed in the Permanent Settlement which Indian experience only partially modified. Utilitarian ideas of rent played an important part in the settlement of the north-west and ideas of western efficiency dictated the annexation policy. Foreign policy was controlled more from London than from Calcutta and education, and indeed all philanthropic measures, were wholly western in inspiration. On the whole the advocates of the Indian point of view, whether as defenders of suttee or champions of princely rights, fought a losing battle. English policy during this time was mainly a reflection of London opinion with the Viceroy tending increasingly to become the cabinet's executive agent. Only towards its close did Indian opinion begin to make its first modest but significant contributions. And then it was not *traditional* Indian opinion so much as sunburnt Gladstonianism.

Lord Canning, like Dalhousie, wore himself out in the public service and returned home only to die. His reward was to lie with his father in Westminster Abbey. His successor was one of those imperial handymen of whom Lord Macartney (of China fame) was the first

Indian example, Lord Lansdowne perhaps the most conspicuous and Lord Willingdon the last. He was Governor of Jamaica at the age of thirty-one and as Governor-General of Canada in succession to Metcalfe did much to establish parliamentary government by the quiet creation of constitutional precedent. His record in the second China war was more contentious, but it was while on his way thither in 1857 that he showed his power of decision by diverting his whole force to India on receiving Canning's call for help. Elgin was able, independent, and cautious, but his career was cut short by death at Dharmsala after only twenty months of office. In retrospect his term may be said to have continued Canning's régime as Metcalfe continued Bentinck's. The chief event of his time was the Ambela campaign against *Wakhabi* fanatics on the fringes of the Hindu Kush to the west of the Indus. The surprise of Elgin's death forestalled the usual political manœuvres for office and the fact that the Ambela campaign was still in suspense induced the home authorities to look favourably on Indian experience as a qualification. In these circumstances Sir John Lawrence was an obvious choice and he joined Warren Hastings, Shore, and Barlow in the group of 'official' Governor-Generals.

Sir John Lawrence was then fifty-two and of Indian reputation and experience. His labours had transformed an always forceful into a rugged and rather obstinate personality; in the words of P. E. Roberts he was masterful, somewhat obstinate in temperament, and 'exacting in his relations with his subordinates, though, if they did him good service, he loyally supported them'. Men expected action on Panjab lines, but Lawrence considered that tranquillity was the need of the moment. He concentrated on internal development while insisting on external caution. In administration he disappointed where he was expected to excel through over-attention to detail; in policy he excelled where less was expected by a Bismarckian ability to combine moderation with strength.

In essence the rule of Lawrence was a continuation of the Canning period, but it was a continuation clearly marked with the Lawrence stamp. The policy of public works, particularly of railways and irrigation, was pushed forward with vigour. He introduced into Indian finance the principle of raising money for productive works by loan, but even so the annual expenditure rose by nearly £10 million or nearly 20 per cent.[1] The fact that the definition of a productive work had later to be more finely drawn cannot obscure the importance of the decision itself or the courage required to make it. His special care for the peasantry was shown by the passing of Panjab and Oudh Tenancy Acts of 1868, which were essentially the sequels of Canning's Bengal Tenancy Act of 1859. The Panjab Act gave occupancy rights to all tenants who had held land for a specified period and became 'the bulwark and charter of a contented peasantry'. The Oudh Act gave to the

[1] From £45¾ million to £54½ million. In the circumstances a net deficit of £2⅓ million over five years cannot be regarded as ruinous.

cultivator something of the security which Canning and Montgomery had given to the *taluqdars*. One-fifth of the peasants were given occupancy rights at fair rents, allowance for improvements was made, and equitable control of rent rates attempted. This measure was carried through in the teeth of opposition from vested interests and was perhaps the most constructive achievement of the viceroyalty. Two famines visited India during Lawrence's term. The first in Orissa in 1866 cost nearly a million lives owing to the great difficulties of communications, the failure of the Bengal government to take adequate action, and Lawrence's failure to override them in time. The second, in Rajputana and Bundelkhand in 1868–9, found him better prepared and was notable for the enunciation of the principle that the prevention of starvation must be the supreme guide to official action.

In external relations Lawrence maintained Dalhousie's policy of non-intervention. The circumstances of Dost Muhammad's death in 1863 and a prolonged struggle for the succession and of Russian encroachment on the central Asian Khanates made this attitude controversial. As in the case of Canning an epithet coined in derision became a hallmark of distinction; the 'masterly inactivity' which was taken for political myopia or obstinacy was proved by later events to have been true foresight. Rarely has a statesman been so completely and quickly vindicated by time as Lawrence was in Afghanistan.

On Lawrence's retirement Disraeli appointed his Chief Secretary for Ireland, Lord Mayo, then aged forty-six. The appointment was thus a party one, and could have been cancelled by the Liberals who came into office before he sailed. Gladstone's restraint in not following the precedent of the Melbourne Whigs in the case of Lord Heytesbury in 1835 confirmed the bipartisan nature of Indian government. Mayo's appointment was a characteristic Disraelian leap in the dark to many but the greatness of the opportunity revealed the extent of his talents. His ability and industry were adorned with charm to make his government one of the most successful in the series.

Mayo had first to deal with the financial deficit left by Lawrence. This he achieved with the help of the Strachey brothers by increasing the salt duty and income tax and by enforcing economies. The changes culminated in the substitution of fixed block grants over a period of five years to the provincial governments for annual grants earmarked for special purposes. An incentive was thus provided for economy since savings in one department or year could be used in another instead of reverting to the central exchequer. As a result 'he found a serious deficit and left a substantial surplus; he found estimates habitually untrustworthy, he left them thoroughly worthy of confidence'. He showed his imagination by increasing the powers of the town committees permitted by the Act of 1850, and thus taking an important step in developing local self-government, and by founding the first college at Ajmir for the education of chiefs and nobles. It was the beginning of princely reforms by persuasion, and the logical

corollary of the recognition of the princes as an integral part of the empire.

Abroad Mayo continued the established policy of non-intervention. He exercised his charm in the friendly management of Sher Ali at the meeting at Ambala in 1869 and afterwards and in helping to secure Russian recognition of the Oxus as the northern Afghan frontier.

Mayo's government promised to rise from distinction to brilliance when it was cut short by the dagger of a Pathan fanatic at the conclusion of a visit to the Andamans in February 1872. Gladstone appointed as his successor Lord Northbrook, the head of the banking Baring family and at the time Under-Secretary for War. Able, unexpressive and shrewd, he may be described as the business man in the viceregal chair. He had all the qualities needful save the personal magnetism of his predecessor, of which his régime was essentially a less inspired continuation. India was prosperous save for one year of famine and overseas trade was increasing with the opening of the Suez Canal. Though a Liberal he was no doctrinaire free trader and he resisted the reduction of tariff duties below a general level of 5 per cent. on the ground of the special circumstances of India. Though he lacked the imagination to encourage the setting up of rural municipalities in Bengal he realized the danger of allowing Lancashire trading interests to appear to override those of India. His careful measures prevented serious famine in Bengal and Bihar in 1873–4 and he dealt firmly though not dexterously with the Gaekwar of Baroda's alleged attempt to poison his resident.

The return of the Conservatives to power under Disraeli in 1874 marked the beginning of a period when Indian affairs re-entered for a time the orbit of British party politics. The two parties had increasingly different conceptions of Indian policy and Viceroys were shuffled accordingly. They differed primarily on foreign affairs in relation to Afghanistan and Russia and secondarily on the question of the introduction of western institutions. New radicals wished to go further than old Whig relished or old Tory would allow. Northbrook was left undisturbed by the incoming Conservatives but rifts soon developed on the subject of further tariff reductions and Lord Salisbury's proposals for sending an envoy to Kabul. Northbrook resigned a year before his time without waiting for recall. The new Viceroy, Lord Lytton, was the avowed agent of Disraeli and Salisbury. Talented and handsome, witty of speech and bohemian in habit, with something of the literary flair of his novelist father, he hid his fundamental seriousness beneath a cloak of nonchalance which many mistook for frivolity. He had the knack, by speech even more than by action, of arousing Gladstonian moral indignation and came to be regarded as an evil only less than that of his greater chief. He began under suspicion and ended under a cloud. For all that he accomplished much and succeeded in importing some refreshing imagination into Indian policy-making and some unconventionality into the social purlieus of Simla.

Lytton's Afghan policy, which shadowed his name most deeply, will be dealt with separately, but it was in fact only one facet of an eventful government. His first problem was the prolonged famine of 1876–8 which cost the lives of more than 5 million people in British India alone. Some of his methods were criticized, but he showed his grasp and imagination by the appointment of the Famine Commission under Richard Strachey which proved the precursor of the great Famine Code. In finance he called Sir John Strachey from the north-west provinces and with his help evened out the salt duties, thus making the great customs cactus hedges unnecessary, and reduced other inland duties. In this field also he ran into controversy by abolishing, under direction from London, the customs duty on the coarser kinds of cotton cloth. This draught of the pure milk of free trade was thought by the nascent Indian opinion and many officials to be really Lancashire's tit-for-tat against the rising Bombay cotton industry. Lytton's imagination was shown in the establishment of the statutory civil service of nominated Indians to whom one-sixth of the posts hitherto reserved for the covenanted service were to be thrown open. This was the first serious attempt to fulfil the promise of the Charter Act of 1833 repeated by the Royal Proclamation of 1858. He also proposed an Indian peerage and privy council to match the queen's assumption of the imperial title. Less imaginative but almost equally abortive was the Vernacular Press Act of 1878, which imposed restrictions on the vernacular press not applied to the English. Though some Indian papers were already published in English the hand of racial discrimination was detected by the rising and sensitive westernized class.

When Gladstone returned to power in 1880 Lytton resigned without waiting for recall. He must be accounted as a brilliant failure even apart from the Afghan policy, for though his imagination taught him the importance of sentiment, it failed to show him how to use it. His actions widened the gulf between British and Indian for they aroused distrust where they were meant to impress or to soothe. The severe but genuine paternalism of Lawrence, made genial and friendly by Mayo and remaining sincere though frigid under Northbrook, died away under Lytton to be replaced, in the ears of the Indian public, by the jingling of spurs and tramp of jack-boots. The paternalist had become an alien public authority. Lytton's successor, Lord Ripon, was a man of entirely different stamp. Industrious and able, with a deep moral earnestness,[1] he was staid and uninspiring; the impression he made was due to his moral rather than his personal qualities. Nevertheless he was the first man of major cabinet rank to be appointed since Canning and he came, like Lytton, with a mission. He was a convinced Liberal of the forward school and may be described as Gladstone's agent in India as Lytton was Disraeli's. But whereas Lytton outran his master's wishes Ripon lacked the strength to keep pace with Glad-

[1] It required both conviction and courage at that time for a public man to declare himself a Roman Catholic, as Ripon did in 1873.

a. The Residency, Delhi

b. Dilkusha, near Delhi

PLATE 8

stone's. The fault of Lytton was that he insisted too much, of Ripon that he persisted too little.

Gladstone considered it to be 'our weakness and our calamity' that 'we have not been able to give to India the benefits and blessings of free institutions'. Ripon set out with the intention of making a beginning in that direction. In doing so he had to encounter the hostility of the commercial Europeans, the fears of officials 'who have strongly ingrained in their minds . . . that no one but an Englishman can do anything'. It was the beginning of the change from paternalism to partnership and such changes are notoriously difficult. Ripon succeeded in creating representative local government boards in districts and *tahsils* and in largely extending municipal committees. But his attempt in the Ilbert Bill to enable Indian sessions judges to try Europeans,[1] a practice already permitted in the presidency towns, raised a storm of non-official European protest which received much covert sympathy within the services. After much ill feeling had been aroused Ripon bowed to the storm by agreeing that Europeans might claim a jury, half of whom would be Europeans. In trying to remove one racial distinction he thus succeeded in creating another one; neither party was satisfied and the racial cleavage he had come to close was wider at his departure than on his arrival. But if Ripon's conduct in this matter was not impressive, his general attitude was of the highest importance. The new Indian middle class felt that though the administration was against it, a tide of opinion in Britain was on their side, as they had not felt under Lytton. The dull resentment against Lytton was replaced by hope for the future as well as by admiration for Ripon himself. The fruit of this hope was the Indian National Congress. Ripon's real significance to India was that his failure even more than his successes caused the precipitation in political form of the new Indian westernizing movement. Indians would now oppose government but in the name of western principles; they would demand self-government, but in the forms of western institutions. To the British the new movement had given notice of its existence; it might be belittled, but its existence could no longer be denied.

Other aspects of Ripon's rule have been obscured by the drama of the Ilbert controversy. Ripon behaved as an orthodox Liberal should. He reduced the salt tax and removed the last protective duties; he repealed Lytton's Vernacular Press Act and encouraged the development of primary and secondary schools; he restored Mysore to its raja on his coming of age in 1881 and he made a modest beginning with factory legislation. As an administrator he may be called a tepid Dalhousie as in politics he was a timid Gladstone. But whether timid or tepid, he should not be assessed merely on his shortcomings. By carrying the Liberal spirit to India he began the transition from paternalism to partnership which culminated in 1947. His rule must therefore rank in

[1] In 1873 it had been enacted that a British European subject could only be tried by a European magistrate or sessions judge.

importance with that of Canning, Dalhousie, Bentinck, and Wellesley, even though his personality may have been less arresting than theirs.

When Ripon retired in December 1884, amid unexampled expressions of Indian goodwill, Gladstone's second ministry was staggering towards its fall. It was a time for consolidation rather than forward moves. Ripon's successor Lord Dufferin, was a distinguished member of the regiment of imperial handymen, well fitted by his tact and suavity to assuage the bitter feelings aroused by the Ilbert controversy, and by diplomatic experience and personal distinction to head the Indian government. Few Viceroys have so exactly fulfilled expectations and gone so little beyond them. A diplomatist rather than an administrator or politician his rule might be described as an imperial embassy rather than an orthodox government and in this sense it was highly successful. His main preoccupation was with external affairs where he dealt with the Panjdeh incident of 1885 in Afghanistan and annexed upper Burma in 1886. In India he gave a cautious countenance to the National Congress while not reopening the Ilbert question, and equally cautiously prepared for constitutional reform. He used the new confidence and loyalty of the princes to set up the Imperial Service Corps, state forces available for service overseas. Perhaps even more significant than this proof of princely contentment was the fact that the new corps were officered by Indians and only inspected by British commanders. In a sense they formed the cradle of the modern Indian army. Dufferin's liberalism was shown in three Tenancy Acts, affecting Bengal, Oudh, and the Panjab, which carried previous attempts to protect tenants a stage further.

Lord Dufferin's term covered the home rule crisis in England and saw Lord Salisbury firmly in power at the head of a Unionist ministry. A new wind now began to blow in the British outlook on Indian affairs. The rift in principles of policy narrowed again to differences of expediency, a process helped by the spread of imperialism within the Liberal ranks and the moderation of successive Salisbury governments. Dufferin found no difficulty in working with the new government and on his retirement was given the embassy at Rome. His successor was another imperial handyman in the person of Lord Lansdowne, who had already been Governor-General of Canada and was to become a distinguished Foreign Secretary and deputy-leader of the Conservative party. He was one of the last of the great aristocratic Whigs to whom public duty was a natural vocation, reserve and discretion a second nature. So complete was the mask of quality that it is not easy to perceive the real man behind the veil of classic poise. Without the charm of Mayo or urbanity of Dufferin, the brittle brilliance of Lytton or the moral earnestness of Ripon he was as able but more agreeable than Northbrook and as influential as Ripon. A great gentleman presided over the land, treating men and things alike in the grand manner with courtesy, dignity, and detachment.

The restored continuity in Indian party policy was shown by the

completion, under Lansdowne, of a modest constitutional reform proposed by the Liberal Dufferin.[1] It was Riponism in a minor key. Its details are described elsewhere but its significance lay in the introduction of virtual election for the return of certain Indian members to the Legislative Council and the enlargement of the council's powers to include a discussion on the annual budget. It amounted to a careful revival of Dalhousie's little Parliament on a broader basis. The value of the elective principle, hedged about as it was, lay in providing the first opportunity for the new India to take part in the central Indian government. This was the arena of G. K. Gokhale a few years later. Lansdowne's other internal concern was the fall in the exchange value of the rupee, which fell from about 2*s*. in 1870 to its lowest point of 1*s*. 1*d*. in 1891. This occurred from 1873 owing to the demonetization of silver in Germany and the Latin union. The value of silver declined relative to gold and this hit India hard because she was indebted to a gold standard country in Britain. Exports were stimulated but the cost of imports was ruinous. Before the fall was finally checked in 1895 the income tax had been reimposed and the salt tax enhanced. The rest of Lansdowne's attention was devoted to Afghan and frontier questions which are dealt with separately.

Lansdowne retired during Gladstone's brief fourth ministry. The ministry was divided and no one was anxious to undertake an office with little chance of backing from home and no mandate to fulfil. Lord Cromer declined the Viceroyalty and Sir H. Norman retired after accepting, on grounds of age. Thus the mantle fell on Lord Elgin, who could claim that his father had been Viceroy before him. For two more years the calm induced by Lord Dufferin continued. Then India was struck by plague and famine. Large portions of south, central, and northern India were stricken with famine; but though the famine was on the largest scale the new methods limited deaths to three-quarters of a million, chiefly in areas like the Central Provinces where communications were still primitive. Bubonic plague, which devastated Europe as the Black Death in the fourteenth century and London in 1665 as the Plague, spread across China in the nineties and came from Hong Kong to Bombay in 1896. Jahangir accurately described the symptoms in 1616, but since then there had been no large outbreak. The efforts to prevent the spread of the disease disturbed orthodox sentiment and lead to rioting. It was at this time that B. G. Tilak became prominent. Since that time the disease has been endemic in India but has not again attained such alarming proportions.

In the thirty-six years from 1862 to 1898 we can see the government of India passing through the phase of paternalism, incipient imperialism, and dictatorship, and tentative moves towards partnership. The dominant thread is the paternal one; at the end of the period the government could be described as paternalism tempered by consultation. In the economic field India was subjected to the whole free trade

[1] The Indian Councils Act of 1892.

gospel and experienced the evil as well as the good effects of her entry into world markets. Unobtrusively but steadily she was building up modern industries. Above all, beneath the imposing façade of imperial rule the ferment within Indian society was developing apace, and had reached the point when it had assumed a visible political shape.

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CHAPTER 3

Foreign and Frontier Policy 1862–98

The North-West. The post-Mutiny period saw certain changes in the general geopolitical situation which were the determining causes of both the second Afghan and third Burman wars. After 1857, as before, two of the three prerequisites of Indian security were satisfied. Britain continued to control the sea and the East Indies continued to be controlled by the virtual British auxiliaries, the Dutch. They were, indeed, extending their direct control over the outer East Indian islands, and to that extent making security more secure. But both East and West a change was creeping over the general situation. The eastern change was brought about by the appearance of France. The western change was the more important and will be dealt with first. To the north-west of India security has been historically best achieved by a balance between a strong Indian and a strong Iranian power. India has never in fact controlled the whole Iranian plateau; a strong power there has therefore proved a source of security because it held in check the potential power of central Asia. The traditional cradle of empires may be described as a reservoir of power whose human springs have periodically gushed forth floods, unpredictable in their appearance and uncertain in their force. It was clearly to the interest of India, provided that she herself possessed a strong centre of power, to have as a north-western neighbour a power capable of stemming any ordinary overflow from the central Asian reservoir. With the fall of the Safavids and the death of Nadir Shah in Iran and the collapse of the Mughuls in India this condition ceased to be fulfilled; and when the British reintegrated the Indian empire by 1818 they found confronting them beyond the Indus a distracted Afghanistan and a still weak Persia under the Kajar dynasty. Beyond lay Russia. But her time was not yet. In the twenties and thirties she turned south-west towards Turkey and Constantinople and was sufficiently met by Palmerstonian diplomacy. Between her and the Afghans lay the central Asian Khanates. They were the reason that Auckland's failure to control Afghanistan had no untoward results on the security of India. There was no one as yet to take advantage of it. Russia's eyes were still set on Constantinople. In 1844 she agreed with Britain to regard the central Asian Khanates as a neutral zone between the two empires, thus leaving the Indian government free 'to repair the wire' to Dost Muhammad with the Dost inclined to assist in the process. In these circumstances Persia was in no position to be aggressive while Britain had neither the will nor power (with the Afghans in between) to subjugate Persia. When Persia

seized Herat from its local ruler in 1856 she was quickly induced to retire by Outram's expedition to the Persian Gulf. During these years the Iranian power problem was not solved, but remained in abeyance.

Such a situation could not last and was in fact ended by the Crimean war of 1854–6. The Russian advance towards Constantinople was again checked, but at the same time the understanding over the Khanates was broken. This is the beginning of the second phase of Indian north-western policy during the nineteenth century. In surveying this period there are two considerations which should be borne in mind. The first is that the control of Indian foreign policy was far closer than in the earlier period. From the time that the Red Sea cable was laid in 1870 there was little independent action by Calcutta save for a short period under Lytton and to some extent by Curzon, until Hardinge could write in 1907, 'recently we have left the Government of India entirely out of our account'. The second is that the London cabinet had always in mind, in dealing with Russia, the situation in Europe and the Near East as well as in the Middle East and in central Asia.

Russia could give no help to Persia in 1856 because of her recent defeat in the Crimea. But the Mutiny suggested that Britain was not so strong in India as she had been supposed to be. Thereafter Russia returned to her traditional policy of moving in a direction where resistance was not likely to be great when baulked in her designs elsewhere. The sixties, which were years of recovery, internal reform, and diplomatic quiescence in Europe, saw the beginning of her advance in Asia. In short, she began to move into the central Asian reservoir. The internal springs of that reservoir were drying up, not so much from internal rottenness as from poverty and depopulation induced by the physical desiccation of the region. The Khanates, without modern sources of knowledge or power, were suffering from a creeping paralysis for which there was no remedy. That is why the Tartar Khans, who had once overspread Russia itself, fell easy victims in their turn in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In 1866 Bokhara became a dependent ally; in 1868 Samarkand was acquired and in 1873 Khiva followed. A new province of Russian Turkistan was formed and the Russian base moved a thousand miles from Orenburg to Tashkend. Only Merv now remained between north-eastern Afghanistan with Herat and the Russian empire.

It is now time to turn to Afghan affairs. In the absence of Russian interference the policy of non-intervention begun by Lord Ellenborough had borne good fruit. Dost Muhammad, not yet master of Herat, was glad to have British neutrality and hoped for British support against Persia. Dalhousie concluded a treaty of friendship in 1855 and help was given in the Herat incident. The Dost refrained from taking Peshawar during the Mutiny; he finally captured Herat in 1863 and died a few days later at the age of eighty. There followed a war of succession in the Mughul style but complicated by the fact that the

Dost had sixteen sons instead of the Mughul's usual three or four. John Lawrence resolutely refused to interfere; his policy was described with equal warmth by friends and critics as 'masterly inactivity', but it was in fact only a rather frigid continuation of the existing policy of non-interference. Lawrence saw in each claimant a turbulent *sardar* and found it difficult to disguise his general disapproval of all chiefs. When in 1868 Sher Ali finally defeated his rivals, he was duly recognized as Amir. He had already been provided with a subsidy as soon as his rivals appealed to Persia and Russia for help. Lord Mayo added warmth to Lawrence's correctitude and so wrought on Sher Ali at his Ambala interview in 1869 that the Amir passed on to him the letters that began to arrive from 1870 onwards from the Russian Governor-General Kauffmann. The complement of the non-interference policy was in Lawrence's eyes an understanding with Russia about the integrity of Afghanistan. The Russian advance in Turkistan and the concern which it gave the Amir provided a fresh opportunity. The first Gladstone ministry secured Russian recognition of Sher Ali's possessions south of the Oxus in 1869 and acceptance of his control over Badakshan in 1873.

If the European situation had remained stable this understanding might have settled the Afghan question for many years. But affairs in Europe did not remain static and soon gave to the Russian advance and usual policy of pinpricks a deeper significance. Sher Ali, alarmed by the steady Russian approach, sent an envoy to Simla on the morrow of the fall of Khiva in 1873 to ask for a closer alliance. But Northbrook could offer no more than Mayo's vague promises and henceforth Sher Ali thought it politic to be less frigid towards Russian advances and assurances. Events now moved rapidly. In 1874 Disraeli became prime minister with Lord Salisbury as Secretary of State. In 1875 revolt broke out in the European provinces of Turkey. In 1876 Russia took up the cause of the rebels and moved forward once more. At the beginning of 1878 she was at the gates of Constantinople dictating a peace which would have made her mistress of the Balkans through an inflated but puppet Bulgaria. Britain insisted on revision at the risk of war, succeeding, through Bismarck's intervention, at the Congress of Berlin. The Conservative leaders were deeply suspicious of Russian intentions and therefore viewed her central Asian proceedings with critical eyes. They had in mind both the protection of Afghanistan from Russian attack and a threat through Afghanistan on Russian central Asia as a means of pressure on Russia in Europe. From 1876 they had as their agent in India Lord Lytton, who possessed a schoolboy zest and was to prove 'plus royaliste que le roi'.

The method adopted to further these ends was to put pressure on Sher Ali rather than on Russia direct. Salisbury suggested in early 1875 the dispatch of a British envoy to Kabul with a simultaneous strengthening of Indian forces on the frontier. Northbrook demurred and on the proposal being repeated as an instruction, retired early in the next

year. With Lytton's arrival the proposal was made to the Amir and the occupation of Quetta was secured by treaty with the Khan of Kalat in 1876. On his side the Amir was determined to accept no British resident. The unhappy precedent of his father's time was before him, and in any case it was the general belief in the East that the advent of a British resident at a durbar commonly foreshadowed the end of its independence. He feared the British in refusing and his own subjects in accepting. He was between two fires. Early in 1877 he finally declined the British embassy. But as the crisis in Europe deepened the Russians became more pressing and in July 1878 the Russian General Stolietoff arrived without resistance in Kabul, just as the Congress of Berlin ended. With the Berlin settlement just concluded the proper reply would have been to demand the withdrawal of Stolietoff directly from St. Petersburg. Instead Lytton was allowed to announce the dispatch of a British envoy. From this point control of events virtually passed from London to their impetuous Indian agent because his restraint would have involved a cabinet crisis which the government could not afford to face.

The repulse of the envoy (Sir Neville Chamberlain) at Ali Masjid was followed by invasion. The usual successes brought about the flight of Sher Ali in ominous repetition of the events of 1839. Too late he discovered that the Russians had no help to give. Sher Ali died early in the following year and peace was made by the treaty of Gandarmak with his son Yakub in May 1879. Once more brilliant success proved but the descent to the valley of disappointment. By the treaty Kurram, Pishin, and Sibi were assigned to British control, a resident was established at Kabul with agents elsewhere, and the Amir undertook to conduct his foreign relations in accordance with British advice. In return the British engaged to support Yakub against aggression and pay an annual subsidy of 6 *lakhs* of rupees. It seemed that Afghanistan had now at last become an Indian protected state. But the treaty had thought of everything except the people with whom it was concerned. Within six weeks of his arrival in July the new envoy, Cavagnari, was murdered with his escort in a popular rising. This brought Generals Roberts to Kabul and Stewart to Kandahar while Yakub Khan joined the British camp and became a state prisoner in India.[1] During the winter Roberts was besieged at Sherpur to be joined by Stewart at Kabul in the spring. Lytton's policy was in ruins. The web of policy, he wrote, 'so carefully and so patiently woven, has been rudely shattered'. He had now no resource but to recognize such chiefs as could be found. In Kandahar Sher Ali Khan, as representative of the old Sadazai house, was recognized, while at Herat, Ayub Khan, a son of the Amir Sher Ali, had established himself. There remained Kabul. At the beginning of 1880 there appeared in Balkh, Abdur Rahman, son of Sher Ali's brother and former rival Afzal Khan.[2] He had long been in Russian Turkistan and used by the Russians as a potential

[1] He died at Dehra Dun in 1923.

[2] Afzal reigned in Kabul in 1866–7.

threat to exercise pressure on Sher Ali. Abdur Rahman was a man of forty, 'short and stoutly built, with bluff but pleasant manners and an easy smile, self-possessed and clear-minded'. A master of statecraft had appeared. Lytton clutched at this 'ram caught in a thicket' (which he had not caught); there was now a man to deal with and the arrival of Ripon enabled the tangled skein of Afghan politics to be unravelled at last.

Abdur Rahman was recognized in July 1880 as Amir of Kabul on the sole conditions of having 'no political relations with any foreign power except the English', and confirming the cession of Kurram, Sibi, and Pishin. In return the British promised an annual subsidy and abandoned the claim to post a resident at Kabul. Next Ayub Khan's eruption from Herat and defeat of the Kandahar force in June was countered by Roberts's classic march of 313 miles from Kabul in twenty days and victory at Kandahar. British troops now withdrew from Kabul and the next year from Kandahar, taking Sher Ali Khan with them. In September 1881 the defeat and flight of Ayub Khan completed the consolidation of the new Amir's power which he retained until his death in 1901.

On the whole the second Afghan war must be adjudged an unnecessary one. If Lawrence's attitude to Afghan chiefs savoured too much of his distaste for Sikh *sardars* his policy of non-interference was yet sound in principle when read with its corollary of a direct understanding with Russia. The policy of making Afghanistan a forward bastion of British power in Asia neglected too many fundamentals to have any hope of success. The country was too arid to support an army and too hostile to dispense with one. The distances which precluded large Russian concentrations in Afghanistan equally forbade large British movements beyond the Hindu Kush. Above all, it went against the known Afghan passion for independence which made the position of every force and the life of every envoy precarious. British control of Afghanistan would have meant Russian concentrations on the Oxus followed by the building up of British armies at Kabul and Herat. The policy would have been financially ruinous in any case; it was fortunate for India that the Afghan rising demonstrated its unsoundness before it exacted the penalty of bankruptcy. The only gain from the whole episode was the substitution of Abdur Rahman for Sher Ali. The ease with which a settlement was made with a refugee from Russian territory threw into sharp relief the unwisdom of supposing that every Afghan chief was a secret friend of Russia. They were no more friends of Russia than of Britain; they were friends of Afghan independence.

A final diplomatic brush completed the Afghan settlement. The Russian defeat of the Turkomans in 1881 and the capture of Merv led to fresh fears in Britain or 'mervousness' as the Duke of Argyll called it. Both powers agreed to a joint commission to demarcate the frontier, but an acute situation arose when the Russian General Komaroff drove the Afghans from Panjdeh and threatened the Zulfiqar Pass. Fortunately at the moment Abdur Rahman was visiting Dufferin at Rawal-

pindi. The cool nerve of the one and the tact of the other backed up by the resolute attitude of the second Gladstone ministry prevented war. Abdur Rahman was willing to barter Panjdeh for the vital Zulfiqar while the Russians had no mind to risk a general war. Negotiations were resumed and the boundary agreement, which still holds good, was concluded in 1887.

The Frontier. Something must now be said of the frontier created by the annexation of Sind and the collapse of the Sikh kingdom to which the Afghan wars added prominence as well as importance. In dealing with the frontier the distinction must always be remembered between the Baluchis and the Pathans, peoples very different in custom and situation, who required separate treatment. The first problem in Sind was defence against marauding Baluch bands. Sir Charles Napier's military system relied upon a system of fortified posts. But the posts were too few and the commanders not enterprising enough to deal with a mobile foe. From 1848 John Jacob devised a system of mobile defence by patrols which provided the security needed for increasing the cultivated area. In the Panjab the problem was far more difficult because of the greater length of the line involved, the variety of tribes, the number of tribesmen, and the long tradition of conflict. It is important to remember that the problem was not new. The British inherited from the Sikhs who in turn succeeded the Mughuls. The Mughul method had been to keep open the passes by subsidies; it was indeed the withdrawal of these which made easy Nadir Shah's march into India after his capture of Kabul in 1738. The British were unfortunate in their predecessors. There was a natural antipathy between Sikh and Pathan, the sturdy plainsman and wiry hillman, which was increased by the religious feud. Generals Avitabile and Hari Singh ruled Peshawar and Hazara by terror and controlled their areas just so far as their bullets would carry. The British therefore found resentment and defiance added to the natural turbulence of the tribesmen. Until the seventies non-interference was tried; the remission of the old capitation tax, free trade, and the offer of military service to tribesmen was tempered by punitive expeditions, blockades, and fines. Thus the tribal belt of 25,000 square miles continued in uneasy and perplexing proximity to the British power.

The second Afghan crisis led to the next development of policy. In 1876 the treaty of Jacobabad with the Khan of Kalat extended the treaty of 1854 and secured Quetta as a military base. Thereafter Sir Robert Sandeman developed a system of subsidies in return for duties performed and based on close personal relations with the chiefs and *jirgas* or tribal gatherings, which proved highly successful. It was not, however, suitable for export and failed when applied to the more democratic Mahsuds, whose chiefs could not answer for their people.

There remained the frontier proper stretching from the Hindu Kush to the district of Dera Ismail Khan where the various Pathan tribes held sway. There were four possible lines of defence. The first was the

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river Indus itself, favoured by Lawrence. This has never in fact been an historical boundary in accordance with the maxim that mountains are better barriers than rivers. In addition the east bank of the Indus is for the most part overlooked by the west. The second line was the 'scientific frontier running from Kabul through Ghazni to Kandahar'. This was in fact the Mughul frontier until Kandahar was lost in the reign of Shahjahan. This line covered the western or upper ends of the passes themselves but was subject to attack from the rear by the tribes and was made impracticable by the attitude of the Afghans. There remained two intermediate lines. The first was the old Sikh line which was approximately that of the administrative frontier, and the actual frontier in the post-Sikh years. This left the whole tribal area uncontrolled. The second, eventually called the Durand line, roughly divided the tribal area equally between Afghans and British. Neither of these lines was militarily defensible, but the second had the advantage of reducing the danger of tribal incursions and threats to defence against regular invasion. The military defects of either were, however, mitigated by the firm possession of Quetta, from which any army passing through the western passes could be threatened on its flank and rear.

The radical forward school had its day under Lord Lytton and was then set aside as visionary. The moderate forward school, which looked to the future Durand line, had Lord Roberts as its most distinguished exponent and came into its own under Lansdowne. In 1893, after various hitches,[1] Sir Mortimer Durand persuaded the Amir to agree to a line of demarcation which was henceforth known as the Durand line, in return for an increase of his subsidy from 12 to 18 *lakhs*. The Afghans did little on their side of the line. The British side included the Afridis of the Khyber region, the Mahsuds, the Waziris, the Swat tribes, and the chiefships of Chitral and Gilgit. Over these tribes the British proceeded to assert their authority at the cost of a series of tribal campaigns. Here Elgin reaped what Lansdowne had sown. The Chitral campaign of 1895 led on to the general Pathan rising of 1897 which it needed a force of 35,000 men under Sir Bruce Lockhart to quell. But the problem of controlling the tribal areas was by no means solved and awaited the coming of Lord Curzon before entering its next phase.

The East. The third Burman war of 1885, which heralded the annexation of Upper Burma, has already been touched upon in Chapter 2 above. Here it is placed in its international setting. The French had had connexions with Indo-China as early as the reign of Louis XIV, but it was not until the nineteenth century that they began to interfere actively. Napoleon III, in his search for glory without undue risk or effort, turned his attention eastwards, using the protection of missionaries as a pretext. The Third Republic continued the policy as part of its search for 'compensation' for the loss of Alsace-

[1] Abdur Rahman found that ill health and other preoccupations prevented him from receiving Roberts before he left India.

Lorraine and its former position in Europe. The French empire of Indo-China was thus built up. The French proceedings were narrowly watched by Britain who saw in them a possible threat to the eastern flank of the Indian empire. Unlike Holland, France was in no way dependent upon Britain, but in many respects her rival, while her fleet was next in importance to the British itself. It was French action which hastened the annexation of Upper Burma. In January 1885 the French concluded a public treaty, and followed it up by appointing a consul. A few months later a secret letter, signed by the French foreign minister at the same time as the treaty, and promising the import of arms from Tonkin, was discovered. These proceedings, in which Britain detected a threat to her position in Burma, rather than the grievances of the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation, were the real cause of Dufferin's action. A final flutter occurred with the French ultimatum to Siam in June 1893. Lord Rosebery, who was then Foreign Secretary, while urging the Siamese government to accede to the French demands, refused to submit to a French blockade of Bangkok, which was accordingly raised. For a few hours, according to Rosebery, the issue of peace or war hung in the balance. Siam for the future came to be accepted as a buffer state between the British and French spheres of influence. If French action precipitated the end of Burman independence it at the same time secured that of Siam by bringing into operation the British balance as a counter to further aggression.

Indians overseas. No survey of India's external relations would be complete without paying some attention to the movement of Indians overseas during the Victorian period and the problems to which it gave rise. The record of Indians overseas has a long and honourable history stretching back beyond the beginning of the Christian era. There were undoubtedly commercial contacts with the Near East, overland to Persia and central Asia, by sea to the Persian Gulf and the Arab ports. The first millennium of the Christian era was the great age of Indian expansion in all its forms and this has been dealt with in greater detail in Part I. There were active commercial contacts with the Graeco-Roman world; there was a commercial colony in Alexandria as the Romans had theirs at Muziris and Arikimedu in south India; and 'Indian gymnosophists' or *yogis* were known to the Christian Fathers of the second century. Overland Indian traders and Buddhist priests penetrated into central Asia and along the silk route to China, carrying their wares, their art, and their religion with them. The desiccated cities and monasteries of central Asia bear witness to Indian artistic activity and the art and cults of China to their religious influence. Indian influence was also extensive in Tibet though there was little colonization there. But the major Indian external activity was overseas in south-east Asia. Here India sent representatives of commerce, the arts, and cults and established political kingdoms, as well as cultural spheres of influence. It was overseas that Buddhist art reached its zenith at Borobudur and Hindu art its culmination at Angkor.

With the slackening of the outward thrust from India these cultural outposts lost their positive vigour. The combined result of the Hun and Muslim incursions dried up the stream of Indian intercourse and Hindu ideas, but Indian influence continued in its own right and has persisted in some degree to the present day. In the medieval period there was little of either physical or cultural export, for India was not overpopulated and Indian society was too preoccupied in resisting external pressure at home to think of renewing it abroad. Little remained of former movements but commercial activity in the Near and Middle East and in East Africa. Hindu society in general so lost the habit of foreign adventure that overseas travel came to be regarded as inconsistent with caste.

The situation continued virtually unchanged until the late eighteenth century when close contacts with Europeans revived the desire to proceed overseas. Mirza Abu Talib Khan was one of the first to proceed to England in 1785, while the Brahman Ram Mohan Roy effectively challenged the orthodox taboo on overseas travel by his visit to England in 1830. Even so at the end of the century Surendranath Bannerjee and Mahatma Gandhi both encountered orthodox resistance to their student voyages. So far the movement was one of re-establishment of contact by individual Indians with the outside world. It continues today in the steady stream of students, officials, and business men who proceed overseas to all the countries of the world.

But contacts do not amount to colonization. The larger movement, which has led to the establishment of Indian settlements all over the world began (apart from a slight movement to Burma in the eighteenth century) in the thirties of the nineteenth century. It was prompted by a social and economic revolution in the western world, and helped by certain supporting factors in the Indian situation. The revolution was the abolition of slavery within the British colonial empire and the economic repercussions which followed. Formerly slaves had worked the sugar plantations but now they showed reluctance to work as free labourers, so that only a few years of apprenticeship lay between the planters and apparent ruin. There therefore began an urgent search for an alternative labour supply in the West Indian islands of Jamaica and Trinidad, in British Guiana in South America, and in Mauritius in the south Indian Ocean. In India there were factors making for a response. The decline of the handicraft industry caused by the introduction of machine-made cotton goods had caused unemployment both in Bengal and Madras. From time to time from the thirties onwards to the end of the century, famines created temporary distress which encouraged thoughts of overseas work. And from about 1870 the growth of population, with its consequent fragmentation of holdings and increase of landless labourers, began to press upon the means of subsistence. The first departures to Mauritius were privately arranged but both the Indian and home governments soon found that intervention and regulation were necessary. Thus grew up the indenture system, the main

principle of which was that the labourer bound himself to serve on a plantation for a term of years (usually five or seven), at the end of which time he was entitled to a free passage home or to remain in the colony as a free labourer. There were many variations of this general plan, depending upon the regulations for recruitment, conditions during the indenture period, for return and for settlement. In all there was supposed to be free contract to start with and free labour, return or settlement to end with, but in all there was the basic fact of ignorance and need on the one hand dealing with knowledge and interest on the other. Abuses were almost inevitable and did not fail frequently to occur. But the early records show on the whole that the Indian and home governments were honourably anxious to protect the interests of the labourer against planter and contractor exploitation. The colonial governments also desired fair play but they were subject to local pressure far more severe than that experienced by the Colonial Office in London. A variant of the indenture system was the *kangani* system, by which a foreman or 'boss' recruited his own gang of twenty-five or thirty men and was responsible for their general supervision and control.

By these means a series of Indian settlements grew up from Mauritius and Fiji in the south Indian and Pacific Oceans, through Malaya and Burma in East Asia, Ceylon (where the old established Jaffna Tamils were reinforced by fresh arrivals), to Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda, and South Africa (mainly in Natal), in Africa, and on to Trinidad and Jamaica in the Caribbean basin and British Guiana in South America. The settlements arose because the labourers on the whole found the status of a free labourer or trader more attractive than a return to India where they had only known poverty and with which they had lost their links. These settlements created fresh problems both for the colonies concerned and the settlers themselves. They found themselves members of new plural societies, and subject to all the tensions experienced by groups of different racial origin, cultural backgrounds and levels, and economic capacity. In some areas planters endeavoured to compel labourers to stay on because of the labour shortage; in others, as in Natal, they later tried to induce them to leave as economic competitors. In the upshot the settlements grew; the labourers in many cases developed into small traders, from whom grew by degrees a professional and commercial class. The indenture system was transmuted into 'assisted emigration' which ended altogether after the first World War.[1] These communities, which now number about $3\frac{1}{2}$ millions in all, have in the units mentioned acquired self-consciousness and a recognized place in local corporate life. In British Guiana Indians are the strongest group; in Trinidad, Mauritius, Fiji, and

[1] The dates for the ending of indenture are as follows: Mauritius, 1915; Fiji, 1920; Br. Guiana, 1917; Trinidad, Natal, 1911; Malaya, 1878. In Burma, Malaya (after 1878), and Ceylon the *kangani* system or its variant, the *maistry* system, prevailed.

Malaya they are very influential. Their stake in the country is recognized in Kenya and Tanganyika; only in South Africa, in spite of the efforts of Mahatma Gandhi, Lord Hardinge, and General Smuts, have their disabilities increased rather than declined and are they clearly unwelcome to the settlers who first asked for their services.

To these 'settlements of labour' there should be added the settlements of trade and commerce, which have been smaller, more long lived, and more stable. The leading case of this type of settlement is to be found in East Africa where enterprising western India traders, many of them followers of the Agha Khan, have long been active.

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CHAPTER 4

Economic Policy and Development, 1858–1939

THE hey-day of the British power in India was also the high noon of *laissez-faire* economic doctrine. Indian policy inevitably felt the influence of this climate of opinion. To interfere as little as possible with economic processes was considered to be the highest wisdom. Yet even the purists admitted that in certain circumstances positive action might be necessary. In fact such circumstances were never altogether lacking in India as elsewhere. The financial emergency of the Mutiny left the government with a pressing problem of ways and means. There was the need for developing India along modern lines for which there was no one but the government to take the initiative. The periodical famines were becoming a reproach to a government equipped with the resources of the new scientific age. The progress made in dealing with these matters in turn tended to end the old practical economic isolation of the Indian sub-continent. A peasant subsistence economy supplemented by cottage industries and a modicum of foreign trade was increasingly modified by the conditions of world trade. Food crops were replaced by cash crops; production for home consumption by production for foreign factories; and the old decayed cottage industries by new power-driven factories. These exigencies and developments compelled government action to a steadily increasing degree. But the *laissez-faire* principle held in general up to the outbreak of the first World War, just as it did in Britain, though with increasing misgivings and doubts.

The first financial problem facing the post-Mutiny government was that of ways and means. Before the crisis the mainstay of the revenue had been the traditional land tax. This was now reduced, and even when restored could not readily be expanded. There remained the duties on opium, salt and stamps, excise, customs, and provincial charges. But the only large increases possible here would fly in the face of economic doctrine as in the case of customs or of public policy as in the case of salt. Between 1859 and 1862 Wilson and Laing restored equilibrium by enforcing drastic economies, by increasing the salt tax, by imposing a uniform import tariff of 10 per cent., and instituting an income tax on non-agricultural incomes. There followed a period of expanding trade which enabled the great public works programme to be financed out of revenue. But Lawrence found that there was a strict limit to this process, and deficits recurred. In 1867 he secured sanction for the financing of productive works by means of loans. This measure, under improved rules drawn up by Lord Mayo, became a

recognized feature of financial policy. It enabled the great irrigation programme to be pushed on and also helped in the construction of railways. The same ruler improved the administration of provincial finance by modifying the system of central grants. Hitherto grants had been made to the provincial governments for each item of estimated expenditure. Underspending on any particular item brought no benefit to the provincial government because the grant lapsed at the end of the financial year; overspending on the other hand incurred no penalty since the Centre was virtually compelled to make up the deficit. In 1870 this plan was replaced by a system devised by the brothers Richard and John Strachey. A fixed yearly grant was now made to each provincial government subject to revision every five years. Within each quinquennium, therefore, the provincial governments had a certain amount of elbow room, though the system did not allow for sudden emergencies or fluctuations in cost. It also led to the beginnings of real provincial finance by the addition of local cesses[1] to increase local resources. This was extended in 1877 by Sir John Strachey who gave provincial governments a share in the revenues instead of a fixed grant from the central treasury.

The free-trade wind still blew strongly. The government of India was soon under pressure to reduce its customs. They were first lowered to 5 per cent. In 1879, on the insistence of Lancashire, the cotton duties were abolished. This aroused strong opposition in India, both official and popular, and was only carried by the exercise of the Governor-General's power of overriding his council. It was thought to be a surrender of Indian to British interests and was the first overt instance of an economic clash of interest between the two countries. At the same time the wholly beneficial measure of abolishing the inland customs cactus line was completed.[2] This was made possible by agreements with the states whereby they gave up the manufacture of salt in return for compensation. It was then possible so to equalize the salt duty that it was no longer profitable to move salt from province to province. This was followed by further remissions until a state of virtual free trade was achieved in 1882. Low export duties were levied for revenue on a few articles only while the few import duties were counterbalanced by excise duties on the same articles. Free trade lasted unimpaired until 1894 when the rupee currency crisis (dealt with in Chapter 2) made the raising of further revenue imperative. This revived the controversy over the cotton duties. At first cotton was left on the free list but at the end of the year an import duty of 5 per cent. was imposed on cotton piece goods and yarn. An outcry from Lancashire led to the imposition of the 'countervailing cotton excise' of 5 per cent. which was regarded

[1] These were mainly the 'Provincial Rates', which were additional cesses on land introduced in 1878 to provide revenue for the Famine Insurance Scheme.

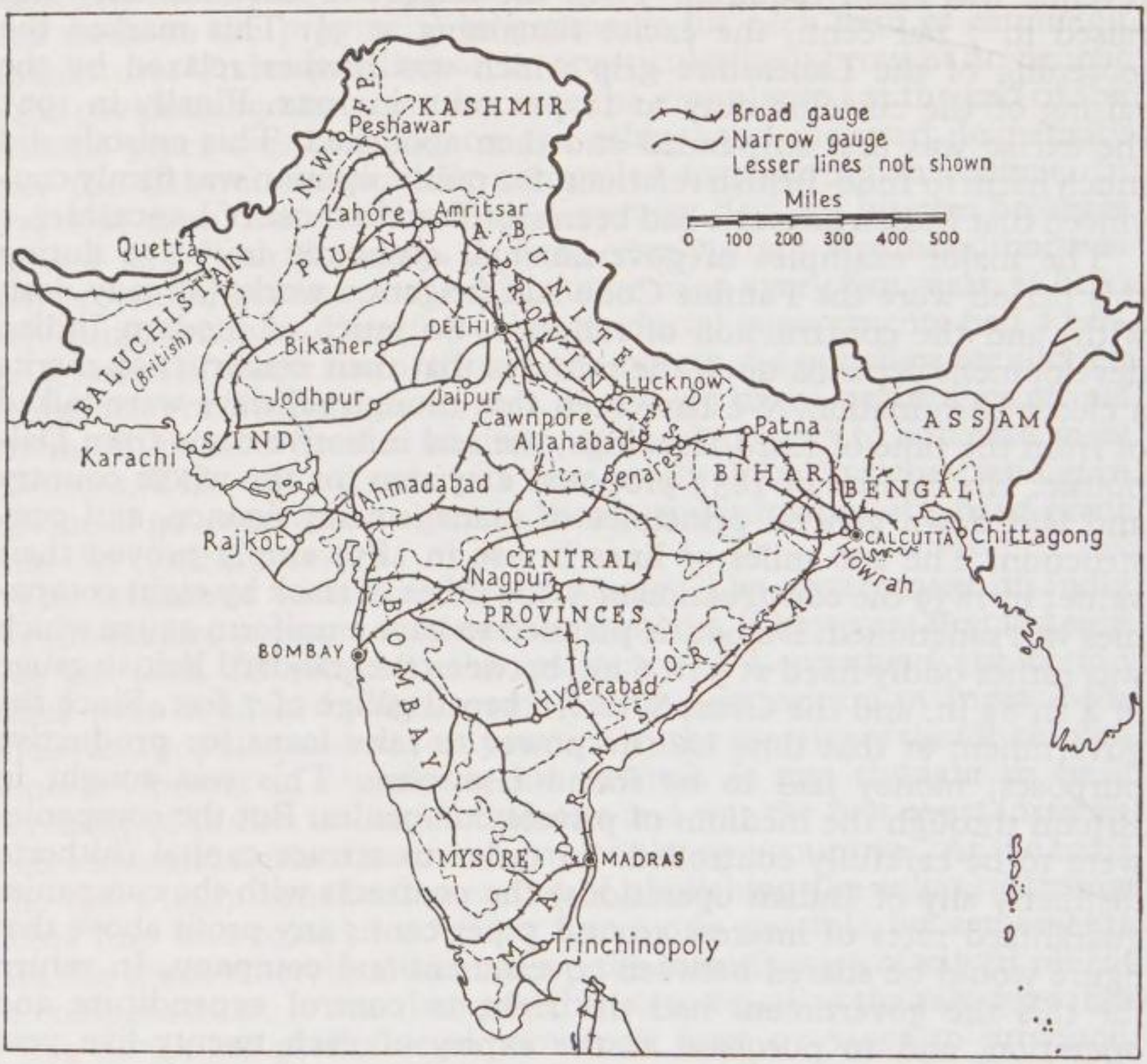
[2] This line consisted of a cactus hedge 2,500 miles long designed to prevent the free transit of bulk articles from province to province. Twelve thousand men were needed to watch it. The first 1,000 miles were abandoned by Northbrook and the remainder by Lytton.

by the Indian mill-owners as naked discrimination in favour of foreign goods. In 1896 both duties were reduced to 3½ per cent. There the matter rested until the middle of the first World War when extra revenue was again required. Then the import or customs duty was raised to 7 per cent., the excise remaining at 3½. This marked the loosening of the Lancashire grip which was further relaxed by the raising of the customs duty to 11 per cent. in 1921. Finally in 1925 the excise was first suspended and then abolished. This episode did much harm to Indo-British relations, for public opinion was firmly convinced that Indian interests had been sacrificed to those of Lancashire.

The major examples of governmental economic initiative during this period were the Famine Code and irrigation works (already dealt with) and the construction of railways. So much of modern Indian development depends upon the railways that their construction merits a closer examination. We have seen that though railways were talked of from the time of Lord Hardinge, the real initiative came from Dalhousie. His minute of 1853 proposed a system for the whole country and laid down general principles of management, finance, and construction. The 200 miles of lines in use in 1857 amply proved their value; in 1859 the construction of 5,000 miles of track by eight companies was sanctioned. Dalhousie planned to have a uniform gauge which was rather oddly fixed at 5 ft. 6 in., between the standard British gauge of 4 ft. 8½ in. and the Great Western broad gauge of 7 feet. Since the government at that time had no power to raise loans for productive purposes, money had to be found elsewnere. This was sought in Britain through the medium of private companies. But the companies were to be carefully controlled. In order to attract capital (hitherto distinctly shy of Indian operations) the contracts with the companies guaranteed rates of interest around 5 per cent.; any profit above that figure would be shared between government and company. In return for this the government had the right to control expenditure and operation, and to purchase at the expiry of each twenty-five year period, while the companies carried mails free and troops at reduced rates.

This system was not free from defects, as will be seen, but it was nevertheless one of great comprehension and foresight, which set in motion on broad lines the whole mechanical transport project of India and looked forward to a national network of railways owned and operated by the government. Not all the later modifications in this plan were for the better. The plan was successful in securing capital to build the railways, though the necessity for the guarantee system in order to attract capital is still disputed. Once committed to this, however, the government could not draw back; attempts to raise money on other terms failed. But the scheme did not encourage economy because the first profits went to government and losses were met by them. It also proved difficult to control the working engineers. The lines in operation in 1868 cost £18,000 a mile instead of the £8,000 planned by

Dalhousie. Against these defects must be set the fact that the actual construction was of high quality, challenging comparison with that of any other system in the world.



RAILWAYS OF INDIA

In the seventies policy was revised. The new permission to borrow for productive work enabled the government to take up construction itself. But for economy's sake the metre gauge was adopted for most of the new lines, some of which had later to be changed to the broad gauge because they proved to be too light for the traffic which developed. The fall in the value of the rupee further retarded construction until the Famine Report's demand for more lines in 1880 made it clear that some further revision of policy was needed. After 1880 there was a return to the guaranteed system of construction by private companies but on terms much improved as the result of experience. Thereafter, as leases fell in the government regularly purchased the lines, operating some itself and allowing the companies to continue to operate the remainder. Thus the Grand Indian Peninsular and the

North Western Railways were state enterprises while the Bombay, Baroda, and Central India Railway remained in private hands. At the same time railways were built in the states, sometimes operated by the state itself, as in the case of Hyderabad, sometimes by private companies or the government of India. Thus by 1900 the major part of the Indian railway system was completed, some 25,000 miles of track being open. By 1914 another 10,000 miles was added. Diversity had replaced the striking uniformity and simplicity of the original plan; three gauges[1] had grown out of one; there were three kinds of ownership and operation and various combinations between them. But the original design of overall government control of planning, ownership, and operation had been maintained. There were no competitive lines such as had sprung up in Britain and no sacrifice of essential needs for the sake of greater returns in more profitable areas. The system was a national one so arranged as to become easily and by almost imperceptible stages a nationalized one. All this was done while individualism was dominant in Britain and high capitalism considered the idea of nationalization a kind of economic *lèse-majesté*. On the whole India's railway planners served her well and saved her from many of the mistakes committed and much of the expense incurred elsewhere. The fruits of this work began to be reaped in a series of annual profits on the working of government-controlled lines. In 1899–1900 a net profit of 11 *lakhs* of rupees was earned for the first time. From then until 1914 there was only one deficit year while the war years with its heavy demands for goods brought in large profits.

The diversity of control, however, caused serious inconvenience. The first step in remedy was the setting up of a railway board in 1905. After the first World War, as a result of the Acworth Committee's report, the railway board was reorganized, the state management of lines was hastened, and a railway budget was separately prepared from 1925–6. By the end of the inter-war period three-quarters of the railways were owned by the state and nearly a half operated by it. The mileage had reached its maximum of about 43,000 miles.

The economic effects of railway construction were very great. Railways, as has already been remarked, transformed the famine problem and made the Famine Code a working proposition. The north Indian famine of 1896 had been called the first 'famine of work' rather than of food. Trade was revolutionized by making possible production for a market and the opening up of the interior to large-scale operations. Plantation and factory industries were made possible because coal could be supplied for power at the points of production, and the finished goods could then be distributed. Finally, all India was brought within the orbit of world economy and the range of world prices. For example cotton manufacture could be carried on in the interior as well as near the coast and the development of the sugar industry was made possible. Not all the effects were good; for example the collapse of the

[1] Including the narrow gauge of the mountain railways and a few lines elsewhere.

Indian handicrafts, the rise in the general price-level, and the upset of the internal economic balance by excessive exports have been charged to their account. But the handicrafts were in decay long before railways were thought of, beginning with the Bengal weavers in the late eighteenth century; the railways only administered the *coup de grâce*. The railways did in India what they did elsewhere; they hastened the transition from handicraft to mechanical industry by transforming the transport situation. They were an essential preliminary to an industrialized India. In fact it can be said of them, and not in an economic context only, no railways, no modern India.

We can now turn to the new industries which were made possible or whose development was assured by the railways. The first of these was the cotton mill industry. The new industry did not so much replace the old handicraft weavers as grow up in the face of a practical monopoly. The old industry was ruined in Bengal and the Carnatic partly by the high-handed methods of the Company after Plassey and the French wars, partly by the collapse of the export trade to Europe, and partly by the lack of any protection against the machine goods of Lancashire. In the early eighteenth century the sale of Indian piece goods was forbidden in England as a measure of protection for the Lancashire handicraft industry. But re-exports to Europe continued until the American War of Independence followed by the revolutionary wars virtually ended them. By that time Lancashire's own handicraft industry had been replaced by the new mechanical production. These goods were imported to India by the Company where they could undersell any Indian goods within reach of the navigable rivers.[1] On its side the Company took to exporting from India raw cotton instead of finished articles. It was not until 1853 that the first successful Indian cotton mill was started in Bombay. The American Civil War caused a set-back by sending up the price of raw cotton with a consequent slump when American cotton came back on the market. Real progress began with the opening of the Empress Mill at Nagpur by the Parsi J. N. Tata in 1887. From that time there has been no going back. Bombay, with more than eighty mills, led the industry, followed by Sholapur, Ahmedabad in Gujarat, Madras, and other lesser centres. By 1914 India was reckoned to be fourth in the world list of cotton manufacturing countries.[2] The industry survived the depression, Gandhian disapproval, and Japanese competition in the thirties. It virtually controls Indian consumption, except for a few 'counts' and the handloom industry which still produces the coarsest cloth or *khaddar* and certain costly luxury lines.

The jute industry was originally a handicraft of Bengal with a small export market. Its value was first realized in 1838 when export started

[1] The average annual value of cotton goods exported from England between 1786 and 1790 was £1,200,000; in 1809 it was £18,400,000.

[2] V. Anstey, *Economic Development of India* (1949), p. 262; see note 2. This was calculated on the percentage of the world's mill consumption by weight.

to Dundee in Scotland. But Bengal jute could only be used for the coarsest goods owing to the lack of standards in cultivation, and local manufacture was impossible owing to the lack of means of power. The Crimean War of 1854 proved a turning-point by cutting off the supply of Russian raw flax and hemp. Improved methods of cultivation enabled Indian jute permanently to supplant Russian materials in the Dundee market. At the same time the development of Indian coal by the new East Indian Railway made jute manufacture in Bengal possible. The first jute-spinning machine was set up near Serampore in 1855 and the first power loom in 1859. At first the cloths produced were inferior to those of Dundee and commanded a local market only. But success came in the seventies and with it rapid expansion which continued almost without a break until the great depression of the thirties. By 1908 Indian output exceeded that of Dundee. Throughout our period India enjoyed a virtual monopoly of jute production. Jute made Calcutta as cotton made Bombay, Madras, and Ahmedabad industrial cities.

The development of the jute and other Indian industries is closely connected with coal as the means of power as well as with railways as the means of transport. Modern industries could not have grown without railways and railways could not have been worked without coal. The first attempt to exploit coal was made by the British magistrate of Chota Nagpur who obtained the right to mine from Warren Hastings. The coal was poor in quality, the demand was small, and the Company found it cheaper to send out coal by ship. In 1814 a fresh venture was made at Raniganj with more success. Bentinck encouraged development and in 1843 the famous Bengal Coal Company was formed from a union of several firms. In 1846 the output was 91,000 tons. The railways came to increase demand and ease supply. The railways themselves, as they developed, took one-third of the total production. The field in Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa was found to contain a plentiful supply of average quality.[1] Henceforth progress was steady. In 1868 ½ million tons were produced. Production passed the million mark in 1880, exceeded 6 millions in 1900, 12 millions in 1912, and 21 millions in 1917. In 1938 it was over 28 million tons. India was virtually self-supporting in one of the essentials of heavy industry.

Associated with the new coalfields came the iron and steel industry. Iron of high quality had been smelted from a very early date, as is shown by the iron pillar near Delhi which dates from the fifth century. Various attempts were made in the early nineteenth century to start an iron industry but they failed for want of both fuel and experience. It was not until coal was used for smelting from 1875 that any progress was made and even then technical difficulties made it chequered and halting. The industry was finally established by the efforts of Jamshed Tata who had seen the possibilities of the iron industry when managing his Empress Mill at Nagpur. Tata died in 1903 just after Curzon had

[1] D. H. Buchanan, *Development of Capitalist Enterprise in India*. See pp. 257–9.

widened the rules for prospecting and mining. But his sons founded in 1907 the Tata Iron and Steel Company at a site in Bihar which they named Jamshedpur. Production of iron began in 1911 and of steel in 1913. By the end of the period this plant was the largest single steel works in the world, producing about a million tons annually; India ranked sixth in the list of steel-producing countries. The whole steel industry is a monument of Indian enterprise and skill built up entirely on Indian capital.

Around or connected with these two major industries grew up a number of other industrial activities. Important among them were the chemical industries among which may be mentioned the manufacture of industrial acids and soda, vegetable oils, and of disinfectants. Engineering developed mainly in connexion with the railways. Miscellaneous industries included rice and flour mills, woollen and silk manufacture, cement (from 1914) and shellac, paper and matches, and sugar refining. By 1933 India was practically self-supporting in cement while the progress of the sugar refining industry was phenomenal after the imposition of a protective tariff in 1932. From 1860 onwards the industrial current was spreading across Indian life like a flooding tide filling the creeks and channels of salt marshes.

It remains to mention the plantation industries. The first of these was tea. During the eighteenth century the East India Company obtained its tea from China, which came to form, indeed, the mainstay of its profits. In the late eighteenth century wild tea plants were found in Assam, but it was at first doubted whether they were genuine tea plants at all, much less consumable. But they suggested that Chinese plants might be acclimatized and Lord William Bentinck accordingly in 1834 sent to China for seed and labour. A government garden was started but was sold in 1839 to the Assam Tea Company. The Indian tea plant would not be ousted by the Chinese. It was the difficulty of clearing the Indian plant to make way for the Chinese which suggested the idea of putting the Indian leaf on the market. The experiment succeeded and from 1850 the industry rapidly expanded. Tea is now grown in Assam, Bengal, the northern hills,[1] and southern India. The expansion of the Indian tea industry can be judged from the fact that until 1850 Britain took the whole of her tea from China; in 1869 she obtained 10 million pounds from India as against 100 million from China; while in 1900 she took 24 million pounds from China and 137 million from India.[2] Compared to tea coffee was of less importance. The plant was introduced in the sixteenth century but systematic cultivation only began in Mysore and south India in the eighteen-thirties. It then developed until 1862 when the borer beetle and leaf blight produced a collapse by 1885. There has been a recovery since, but much of the coffee land has since been planted with tea, cinchona, and rubber. But the second World War revealed that neither of these

[1] Around Darjeeling, Naini Tal, and in the Kangra valley.
[2] In 1929–30 Indian tea exports were 377 million pounds.

last had reached large or even adequate proportions. Indigo remained an important plantation industry (though of a different type to the tea and coffee gardens) until 1897 when the competition of German aniline dyes started a rapid decline.

A major problem of Indian industrial and commercial development was the supply of capital. Until 1850, as we have seen, British capital was shy of Indian adventure. The risks and unknown factors were too great, and prospects in other directions too bright. The working capital of the agency houses after 1813 at first consisted mainly of the savings of the Company's servants. Their cries of woe when these houses fell as in the crisis of 1831 were loud and poignant. Indian capital was also shy for different reasons. It needed to acquire confidence in the new régime, and outside the presidency towns, to acquire the habit of investment. Investment for large-scale production for 'enabling' works like railways was an unfamiliar and suspected practice. Thus the first big developments came when European capital was coaxed into the country by government guarantees or went of its own free will to develop industries with which it was already familiar as in the case of jute or coal. Indian capital followed where it was in touch with European practice as in Bombay and dealing with familiar products like cotton. These considerations throw into all the greater relief the achievement of the Tatas in developing iron and steel. Thus the major part of the capital provided was British with a steadily increasing Indian proportion from 1900. As late as 1931–2 the capital of companies registered abroad was nearly four times that of companies registered in India.[1] But this is not an exact guide because it leaves out of account the stock in British companies held by Indians, as well as government stocks. Speaking generally it may be said that the capital of the cotton industry was mainly Indian, that of the iron and steel industry entirely so, that of the jute industry about half and half, while the coal and plantation industries were mainly British, together with that used for the building of railways, irrigation, and other public works. Management in the cotton and steel industries was mainly Indian though European technicians were freely employed, that of the jute, coal, and the plantation industries being European, the jute men in particular being Scotch. Their capital, apart of course from government enterprise, operated through joint-stock companies and managing agencies. The latter arose through the convenience found by bodies of capitalists seeking to develop some new activity and lacking any Indian experience, of operating through local agents. It arose in the period after 1813 when private merchants took over the trade formerly monopolized by the Company. The money would be found in Britain to promote a tea garden, a coal mine, or a jute mill, but the management would be confided to a firm already on the spot. The managing agency was the hyphen connecting capital with experience and local knowledge.

Until 1914 the policy of the government continued in the main to

[1] V. Anstey, op. cit., p. 110.

be one of 'enabling' private capital and enterprise to develop the country. Direct promotion was confined to public utilities like canals and railways. The line between enabling and interfering action became distinctly blurred, however, in the case of the cotton industry and there was a tendency for enabling action to pass over into the positive promotion of particular projects. This was most noticeable in the time of Lord Curzon with his establishment of an imperial department of agriculture with a research station at Pusa and a department of commerce and industry presided over by a sixth member of the Viceroy's Council. The first World War began the transition to a new period of active promotion and positive support. As the conflict lengthened there arose a demand for Indian manufactured goods. India failed to take full advantage of this opportunity, partly because of uncertainty as to the future and partly because the means for sudden expansion were lacking. So Japan reaped where India had failed to sow. The outcome of this situation was the appointment of an industrial commission in 1916 under pressure from London. The commission criticized the unequal development of Indian industry which had led to the missing of her war opportunity. A much closer co-operation with industry was planned through provincial departments of industry. Increased technical training and technical assistance to industry was proposed while it was suggested that the central government should set up a stores department which should aim at making India self-sufficing in this respect. The commission's report was only partially implemented, but a stores department and provincial industrial departments were created and something was done towards promoting technical assistance. The importance of the report and its aftermath was that it marked the transition from the conception of Indian economy in broadly colonial terms with freedom for private enterprise to the conception of India as an autonomous economic unit.

In the wake of the war came a boom and a slump followed by the Inchcape Retrenchment Committee of 1922–3. The war also brought the Montford reforms with their new political outlook. Economic autonomy went hand-in-hand with political self-determination and mutually reacted upon each other. A result of this interaction was the acceptance of the principle of fiscal autonomy for India in 1921. The Fiscal Commission followed to work out the new policy in detail. One result of the new attitude was the suspension and final abolition of the cotton excise in 1926. Another and most important one was a new tariff policy. Customs were regarded as a means of revenue to give a new flexibility to Indian finance. Raw materials and semi-manufactured goods were to be admitted at low rates, while protective duties could be imposed to help promising industries find their feet or to protect established ones from unfair competition. The instrument of this considered protectionism was the Tariff Board which was set up in 1923. By its action the steel industry was able to meet foreign competition and survive the depression of the thirties, the cotton industry was

saved from Japanese undercutting, and new industries like sugar refining enabled to establish themselves. It can thus be said that from 1921 Indian industry was no longer regarded as an 'extra', even if a desirable one, but as an integral part of the Indian economy whose care and nurture was a primary duty of government.

A result of these developments which is too often overlooked was an immense increase of population. In Akbar's reign it was estimated at 100 millions. By Aurangzeb's accession it must have been much greater, but from 1700 there was a decline through famine and wars. By inference from incomplete estimates a figure of about 130 millions may be suggested for all India in 1800. The first census in 1872 gave a total of 206 millions which was, however, probably an underestimate. In 1901 the total was 294 millions, in 1921 318 millions, and in 1941, without Burma, 388 millions. What had the British done for these people? We can say in the first place that they brought them into existence by providing security, by overcoming famine, by increasing the means of subsistence through irrigation, by health measures which reduced the death-rate, by land settlement, and by developing commerce and industry. Whether the average person had more to eat and lived better than in Akbar's day is a question on which economists differ widely. Undoubtedly much of the new wealth served to feed more mouths rather than to enable people to live better. The main beneficiaries in living standards were probably the new middle class whose position materially as well as morally improved beyond comparison with Mughul times. Yet all, or nearly all, shared in the new amenities brought by the new age. Railways promoted movement as never before whether for commerce or conference or pilgrimage. Motor transport opened up the countryside still further. Health measures lengthened life and education gave it more content. New crops and new industries gave new opportunities of betterment. Fear of famine was largely banished and fear of disease reduced. For the middle classes a new world of opportunity dawned and for all life was a little fuller than it had been before. If rural India was not yet awake before 1920, it was at least stirring in its sleep.

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CHAPTER 5

The New India—Western Influence

We have noted the controversy between the British apostles of radical western innovation, the conservative defenders of the *status quo*, and the advocates of the 'line-upon-line, here a little and there a little' policy. The dynamic of the first school, both in its rationalist and religious aspects, was justice, reason, and humanism, the motive of the second fear of popular upheaval, and of the third a mixture of the first two. All parties agreed in condemning the elements in traditional Hinduism which conflicted with western rationalist ideas and Christian values; they differed in their own first principles and the line of approach. The extreme conservative preached non-interference because he believed in leaving other people alone to their own devices, not because he approved of them. His was the Brahmanical attitude in reverse. The advocates of innovation won the day on the whole because they floated on the flowing tide of western liberal opinion. The new ideas seeped in through members of Parliament and the cabinet, directors and the Company's servants in India. Mounstuart Elphinstone, for example, could not alone have changed policy and outlook in England, but he was himself a symptom of that changing outlook and policy. The innovators were restrained from pushing reform to the point of revolution by the caution enjoined on upstart imperialists in a great and as yet little-known dominion. Growing knowledge increased respect for the diversity and complexity of Indian life and so bred circumspection in seeking improvement.

The measures of the thirties were born of conviction and nurtured in hope. We must not forget that in England itself it was the age of the Great Reform Bill, when to liberals at least it seemed for a while that the 'world's great age began anew'. During the rest of the century this spirit was never quite extinguished, but the flame of progress flared and flickered, and at times burnt low. The westernizing movement was based on the double belief that it was good for India and that she would accept it as soon as she awoke to the light of the modern world. At first the omens in both directions were favourable. In the forties government's attention was diverted by wars but progress continued out of hearing of the guns. With Dalhousie the flame shot up though the undiscerning were too dazzled by the glare of his wars and annexations to take much notice.

The Mutiny brought the whole question to the focus of public discussion. There were those who considered it proof that India was unchanging and incorrigible; there were others, like the men of the

Panjab school, who were inclined to agree but insisted that these measures should be continued nevertheless on broad grounds of moral duty and humanity. Reform, having become a burden instead of a pleasure, must be shouldered manfully as a duty. There were others who saw the Mutiny more clearly as an interlude or as a protest of conservatives hustled too sharply. But on the whole it was the second school which held the field of opinion, and it was this which set the tone for the next twenty years. The Panjab school were its great exponents and their popularity in England secured a wide acceptance of their views. Self-government must depend on self-reform; self-reform was so slow that self-government could only come in a very distant future. The British were trustees in the position of long-leaseholders. The effect of this waning of the liberal western faith was seen in a shift of emphasis in westernizing policy. In Bentinck's time the principal measures were moral and spiritual like the abolition of suttee and the new education policy. Later material projects like irrigation plans appeared. Dalhousie's measures were both moral and material, a fresh impetus to education and to western methods of administration on the one hand, and to public works of all kinds on the other. In the post-Mutiny period the emphasis was more definitely on material improvement. Educational and other moral measures were pursued, it is true, but there was much greater reluctance to interfere in any way with the Indian social structure. The promotion of material improvement both satisfied constructive impulses and allayed fears of another uprising and did something to salve the conscience of the moral reformer. This trend was further strengthened by the prospect of fresh sources of wealth occasioned by the development of railways with their power of tapping new resources.

In the eighties a fresh current of liberalism made itself felt in India, which in Britain was associated with the radicalism of Chamberlain and the later phase of Gladstone. Once more attention was turned to the mind of India. These people thought that they detected westward movements there whose existence their opponents doubted and the official class in India minimized. They wished to make a response in the direction of popular representation. From the late eighties the development of an Indian movement was not doubted in Britain; controversy henceforth turned on its extent and the speed of its growth. By no means all Liberals were convinced of the significance of this new movement before 1900 while leading Conservatives had moved away from the 'unchanging east' dogma by 1890.

We have already noted the beginning of the new education policy in 1835, which was perhaps the most far-reaching single measure in the whole nineteenth century. Without it there could have been no Indian nation as we know it today. The more austere aspects of the westernizing policy were removed by Lord Auckland in 1840, when he restored some government patronage to Eastern learning without ceasing to make western learning the main content of official education. On the

other hand the new education was given a great stimulus by the rule that employment in government offices should go to those who had benefited from a course of the new education. English was now as necessary to the literary and secretarial class as Persian had previously been. A knowledge of English could secure entry into that class to those who did not belong to the literary castes. The next landmark was Sir Charles Wood's educational dispatch of 1854, which was eagerly implemented by Dalhousie. 'We are desirous', said the dispatch, 'of extending far more widely the means of acquiring general European knowledge.' The dispatch led to the foundation of the first three universities of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras in 1857 on the London examining model, though not with London University standards. The grant-in-aid system was introduced, which enabled private colleges to be organized all over the country, by making grants for maintenance provided certain standards were maintained. Departments of public instruction were set up in place of the old amateur committees. This tended to officialize education and make it more stereotyped, but it was a necessary development if the large expansion hoped for was to be guided and controlled. These departments had more ample funds than previously, were able to lay down rules of procedure, and to appoint inspectors. Finally an educational service was established to provide a cadre of teachers for the new schools and colleges.

As soon as the shock of the Mutiny was past these measures produced a rapid expansion of higher education. Government schools and colleges were established at important points as model institutions; the grant-in-aid system encouraged the founding of private institutions both to supplement government colleges in the larger centres and to take their place elsewhere. India was soon covered with a network of public and private colleges and schools. The aim was to popularize education and in this the government certainly succeeded. But this expansion brought its problems also. Attention was concentrated upon high schools and colleges and primary vernacular education tended to lag behind. Between 1865 and 1886 the proportion of boys at school to undergraduates at college sank to 314 from 390 to 1. Girls' education still lagged behind owing to public apathy and orthodox opposition. In the interests of popularizing western education standards were relaxed as soon as it was realized that a high standard would seriously restrict entry. In 1857 2 candidates obtained degrees out of 13 entrants and 111 were admitted out of 464 applicants. This standard was thought to be incompatible with the purpose of 'passing every student of ordinary ability who had fairly profited by the curriculum of school and college study which he had passed through'. The result was a lowering of standards, which, once started, was difficult to stop because there existed no easily available educational yardstick against which to measure Indian standards. The obvious one was that of London University, and once this was abandoned there was no other. There was much to be said for a standard lower than London for the sake of

popularization. But no distinction was made between pass and honours candidates. The result was that instead of adding quantity to quality the new system substituted the one for the other. For real quality in western education it was necessary to go to Britain so that Indian education came to acquire a second-rate reputation. It served its purpose of spreading western knowledge widely but failed to produce, on its own merits, a new intellectual *élite*. Fortunately the course of educational history has shown that real talent will break through the worst of systems, and India proved no exception to this rule. Along with failed B.A.s and the barely passed appeared men of real distinction.

The new educational service upon which the new system depended was not well managed by government. Its pay did not attract the best men and too often government did not know how to use them when it got them. The successes, like Edwin Arnold, were accidental rather than intentional, and the service was as a whole weighted down by officialdom in its direction and by mediocrity engaged for cheapness in its members. 'Everywhere departmental convenience was preferred, until very recent times, to educational interests; and the sort of man whom the departments really liked was one who was willing to be transferred from the teaching of history to the teaching of physics and from that to the inspection of schools.'[1] In the main Indo-European scholars continued to come from the services rather than the educational class in the persons of men like Elliot, William Irvine, Vincent Smith, and Beveridge. A further defect was the lack of any moral content or personal contact in the new system. The universities were not what their name implied, but agencies for prescribing courses and conducting examinations whose headquarters many students never even saw. Nor was the defect remedied in most of the colleges themselves, except some missionary ones, because for financial reasons they tended to place reliance on formal class teaching to overcrowded classes. The mass lecture led to impersonal examination by a remote organization; the award of a degree certified a modicum of knowledge which was often learned by rote. With such methods it is only surprising that so much came from so little.

Lord Ripon took the next step by appointing the Hunter Commission in 1882. This body surveyed the whole field of education and at least did service in pointing to defects to be remedied. The encouragement of primary and girls' education, of science and moral instruction, were all urged. The most practical result was the reorganization of the educational service which now consisted of three branches, the all-India educational service, the provincial, and the subordinate services. The all-India service now attracted a better type of British graduate, while to the provincial service increasing numbers of Indians were appointed. It was hoped to foster primary education by confiding it to the care of the new municipal and district boards. But no great progress came from this well intentioned move because, apart from the

[1] H. H. Dodwell, *Sketch of the History of India, 1858–1918*, p. 205.

a. Bahadur Shah

b. Sayyid Ahmad Khan

limitation of local resources, such a measure was like confiding the spread of the gospel to the unconverted. Efforts to introduce moral instruction were defeated by official objections and to encourage science by the general preference for literary studies. This, then, was the general state of education at the end of the century. It was overweighted at the top at the expense of primary education; that is, the old tradition that education was for the few was largely maintained. The higher education itself was undifferentiated in kind and had achieved popularity at the expense of quality. Nevertheless the educational service had been improved and some of the major problems were realized if not solved. A large impact had been made on the people throughout the country and a new class was fast rising which shared a common language and stock of western knowledge and ideas. The significance of this will be considered in the next chapter; meanwhile we may note that the whole system was ripe for the reforming hand of a Curzon.

After the Mutiny there were few or no changes attempted in the structure of Indian society, and such as were enacted were by general consent.[1] The changes introduced were innovations which stood side by side with the traditional social structure, and whose influence upon it, if any, was indirect. In this class we may place the development of local government. In the villages self-government had survived in many areas, and, as we have seen, sedulous attempts were made to preserve the village communities, with varying degrees of success. But in these there was no trace of municipal self-government, the only signs of corporate life being in trade guilds and caste associations. These were often divisive rather than unifying in their effect. The early British settlements had local administrations, but they were in no sense representative of the tax or rate-payers. There were mayors and aldermen with judicial powers and much dignity, but they were nominated by the Company. The rapid growth of the presidency towns raised many administrative problems which prompted many expedients. It was in the seventies that the first municipal bodies with a real representative element were established. In 1872 half the Bombay corporation was elected by ratepayers; in 1878 the Bombay model was adopted at Calcutta and Madras introduced the representative principle. These bodies, particularly that of Bombay, were the first real schools of British Indian statesmanship.

Elsewhere Dalhousie's Act of 1850 permitted the setting up of town committees empowered to levy indirect taxes, but few in fact were established. Lord Mayo enlarged their powers over education, sanitation, and local public works. But Lord Ripon is rightly regarded as the real founder of modern local self-government; his measures were more comprehensive than previous ones and devised with the deliberate intention of introducing democratic practice. 'They are chiefly desirable as a measure of political and popular education', he wrote. He established a network of district and *tahsil* or *taluq* boards in the

[1] See the *Cambridge History of India*, vol. vi, p. 394.

country and urban boards called municipal committees in the towns. From a half to two-thirds of the members were elected and powers were given to elect non-official chairmen. They were given powers over education, sanitation, public works, and health, and financial authority to levy octroi, terminal, property, and other duties. The fortunes of these bodies were chequered, but there is no doubt that to a large extent they fulfilled their educative purpose even when they fell short in administrative achievement.

Along with these measures must be noted the progress towards the Indianization of the services. The monopoly by the Company's civil service of all posts worth more than Rs. 500 a month established by Cornwallis was mitigated by degrees in the years that followed. Bentinck went farther by creating the posts of *Sadr Amins* and *Principal Sadr Amins*. At the same time the Charter Act of 1833 declared that no one should be debarred from holding any post by reason of race or religion. It even contemplated the substitution of competition for nomination to the covenanted service. But for twenty years more the directors retained their monopoly of appointments. The British in India were a 'commonwealth of magistrates' and 'the higher government officials formed a caste closer than had even the *mansabdars* of Akbar'. Change came but slowly. In 1853 the last Charter Act threw open the covenanted service to competitive examination. But since the examinations were held in Britain, Indians had not only to make the voyage thither but also had to reside there for a long period. Only the wealthy could do this and they were few. Only the Muslims could come without religious difficulty and they were backward and poor. In these circumstances it was not till 1863 that the first Indian, Satyendra Nath Tagore, entered the service, and the stream remained a trickle until after the first World War. Lytton, who was frank as well as ill advised, wrote of 'the acknowledged failure to fulfil fairly the promises given'. His remedy was the statutory civil service of 1879. Under this scheme one-sixth of the posts previously held by the civil service were to be filled by men nominated by the local governments. They were to be men of good family whom the subordinate service did not attract. By this means Lytton hoped to coax the old families into partnership with the British. It was far-sighted in its way, but it was the middle class rather than the aristocracy who were anxious to take up the burden of official life. Recruitment therefore languished. In 1887 the statutory service was abolished and replaced by a division of all civil servants into the imperial civil, the provincial, and the subordinate services. The imperial service continued to be recruited by examination, nomination, and promotion in India. One-fifth of the posts reserved to the imperial service were now thrown open to members of the provincial services. At the same time it should be noted that there was during these years a large increase in the numbers of the superior services which also increased opportunities for Indians. Having said so much it remains to add that Lytton was right in his

opinion of the position if not altogether happy in his method of dealing with it. Something had been done, but not enough. The failure of the home government to fulfil adequately its promises in the matter of official appointments was a proof, not of their insincerity or ill will but of the strength of the corporate vested interest which several generations of British officials had built up in India since 1800. No votes were to be won by pressing on reforms of this nature while obstinate and skilful obstruction was certain. The matter was therefore shelved until the shock of the first World War.

There were two unofficial westernizing agencies which now demand attention. The first was the press. The first newspaper in India was the *Bengal Gazette*, edited by James Hicky, which appeared in 1780 and was suppressed by Warren Hastings two years later after a stormy and notorious career. From that time a succession of journals appeared and a running fight for freedom of speech was waged with government. This culminated in John Adam's regulation of 1823 requiring a printer to obtain a licence before he could publish a newspaper and his expulsion of the editor John Silk Buckingham for infringing Lord Hastings's regulations. In 1835 Metcalfe freed the press from all restrictions and thereby forfeited his chance of permanent appointment. There matters rested until Lytton's Vernacular Press Act of 1878 which imposed restrictions on the vernacular press only. This in its turn was repealed in 1882. Through these vicissitudes and from gossipy and irresponsible beginnings, the press came to exercise an important influence on Indian life. The English press was at first intended for British readers—the commonwealth of magistrates; many of its articles were written by officers like Henry Lawrence or Edwardes under pseudonyms. This press constituted a forum of discussion of Indian policy where the merits or faults of a Napier or a Dalhousie were canvassed with unsparing frankness. In time it broadened its outlook. The *Friend of India*, conducted by Marshman of Serampore, struck a Christian and reforming note; the Calcutta *Statesman* founded by Knight, the Bombay *Times of India*,[1] and others became responsible organs of opinion on current events and questions. As the English-knowing Indian public grew these papers became an important factor in forming Indian opinion. They were the unofficial apostles of western influence and all the more effective for being unofficial. Further they stimulated the development of a genuine Indian press, at first in the local languages and then in English as well. Ram Mohan Roy with his Persian *Mirat-ul-Akhbar*[2] or Mirror of News and *Sambat Kammudi* (Moon of Intelligence) is rightly regarded as the founder of serious Indian journalism. After the Mutiny papers published in English like the Madras *Hindu* and the Allahabad *Leader* took their places beside their British brethren. They provided for the new westernized class a sort of continuation

[1] Founded in 1838 as the *Bombay Times*.

[2] The first was probably the *Bengal Samachar* of 1816. See S. K. De, *History of Bengali Literature*, p. 236.

school as well as a window on the affairs of India as a whole and the world at large. With the coming of political controversy in the eighties they strengthened their hold on the new public and their secondary cultural influence increased in proportion. In a nascent society which had not yet acquired the habit of sustained reading, for which indeed books were not easily available before 1870, which could not afford to buy many of those that were, the newspaper performed an invaluable educative and cultural function.

The second great unofficial influence was that of Christian missions. Christian missionaries had worked in India from the time of St. Francis Xavier in the sixteenth century, and for a time the efforts of de Nobili and other Catholics met with great success in south India. But the effort died away in the eighteenth century[1] while Protestants were represented by a few Lutherans of whom Swartz was the most distinguished. The Company would not give missionaries licences to reside for fear of the effect of their preaching on the feelings of the people. In consequence the first British Protestants had either to live outside the Company's jurisdiction as the Baptist William Carey did at Serampore, or to serve as Company's chaplains like David Brown of Calcutta or Henry Martyn from Cambridge. In 1813 the ban on entry was raised and at the same time a bishopric created at Calcutta (later increased to three). The gracious Bishop Heber and the fiery Daniel Wilson gave distinction and vigour to the Christian cause in India and from this time the number of Christian bodies at work in India began to multiply, to be reinforced in time by many Americans and some Germans. From preaching the missionaries soon passed to teaching, helped by the new demand for English. A departure of the greatest importance was the Presbyterian Alexander Duff's foundation in 1830 of the Scottish Churches College in Calcutta. The appeal was not only to the villager and to the man in the bazaar, but to the intellectual *élite* as well. From 1854 the grant-in-aid system and government policy encouraged a rapid growth in the number of Christian schools and colleges, of which the Madras Christian College was perhaps the foremost. A further departure was the engagement of missionaries in philanthropic activity in the form of hospitals and medical work, of famine relief, and later in rural 'uplift'. Another feature was the large number of women workers of all kinds who were the pioneers of the women's movement in India. We are not here concerned with the development of the Christian community, which by 1930 constituted two per cent. of the population, but with the impact of this Christian work on India as a whole. On the practical side it presented the Chrisitian ethics in action and on the intellectual side it influenced by implication even more than by precept. Most missionaries presented the gospel in its western dress and they were therefore apostles of the West as well as of the pure spirit of Christ. By their manners and conduct, by their very existence, they were influences in favour of the western

[1] See the Abbé Dubois's, *Christianity in India*, 1818.

outlook. In these ways and in these respects Christian missionaries of all kinds exercised a profound influence, which can never be exactly measured, on the development of the new India. The influence was both positive and negative; negative by criticism of the old and positive by embodying the new ethic in personal example and corporate practice.

Nowhere was the influence of the missionaries felt more than in relation to the women's movement. India had her own tradition of feminine culture and participation in public affairs. From Sita and Draupadi of the epics the tale ran through Rajput heroines to princesses like Rupmati of Malwa and Ahalya Bai of Indore. But by 1800 there was little trace of feminine culture or public life; the less attractive aspects of the Hindu conception of the place of women in society were dominant. The new observers of Indian society therefore found little to praise in the condition of Indian women save their resignation and patient acceptance of suffering, and much to criticize. The targets of disapproval, though not all brought forward at the same time, were suttee, infanticide, child marriage, the plight of Hindu widows, purdah or seclusion from public society, polygamy, and temple prostitution. The first two of these were, as has been explained, regarded as general moral evils, and as such were attacked by the government itself, the first by legislative enactment and the second by a mixture of pressure and persuasion. The rest came within the scope of local custom and as such escaped official action. It was the missionaries who supplied the positive foil to negative government action not only by criticism, but also by setting forth a conception of womanhood new to the India of the day and by providing living examples of its nature. They did this partly by their *zenana* activities which brought new ideas behind the purdah, but still more by their educational activities. In 1830 schools for girls were almost non-existent, except perhaps in the Panjab. The first schools were started in Calcutta in the twenties but were mainly for lower-class girls. The Bethune School in 1849 transferred activity to the girls of upper-class families. It was upheld by Dalhousie for five years from his private purse, eventually to become the first government women's college. There followed medical work for women, which in time became more attractive than education. 'Belief in doctors and hospitals is more widespread than the belief in teachers and schools.' The medical development was later than the educational; the first woman doctor in India was the American Clara Swain who arrived in 1874, and the second the Englishwoman Fanny Butler who came in 1880. Thereafter the landmarks were the launching of the Countess of Dufferin's Fund in 1885, the institution of the Woman's Medical Service in 1914, and the founding of the Lady Hardinge Medical College in New Delhi in 1916. Missionaries led the way in the opening of both women's colleges and hospitals. Half the latter before independence were missionary foundations.

In another way the missionary influence was powerful. What was preached to India at large was practised by the growing Christian com-

munity. There the women's literacy rate was higher than in any other community and Christians predominated in the professions open to women. Thus example was added to precept.

These measures had a practical effect in giving women hope against the traditional monsters of ignorance, pain, and disease. They brought with them a new conception of woman as a personality and of her place in society. The effects of these measures appealed also to the masculine mind and worked both by revealing possibilities not considered before and stirring uneasy feelings at continued acquiescence in the *status quo* now shown to be as unnecessary as undesirable. In this way a reform movement *within* Indian society was born, which has gradually wrested the initiative from external agency and made the movement truly Indian. Many reformers appealed to the Hindu tradition for support, but it was contemporary foreign practice which inspired them.

We have seen how Ram Mohan Roy took up the fight against suttee and infanticide in both of which the government intervened on general moral grounds. Thereafter the *Brahmo Samaj* on reformist and the *Arya Samaj* on revivalist principles both found a religious sanction for the women's movement. The Brahmo Keshub Chander Sen advocated education, widow remarriage, and equality in the religious sphere. The Arya Dayananda championed female education on Vedic principles. The Ramkrishna mission with its missionary technique encouraged women as teachers and preachers. The eclectic Theosophical movement was long led by two notable women.

By these means the women's movement became naturalized, as it were, within Indian society. Pandit Vidyasagar secured the first Act for raising the age of consent in 1860 and the legalization of widow remarriage; Pandita Ramabai (1858–1922), a learned Sanskritist as well as a Christian, opened her home for widows; Professor Karve developed his Women's University at Poona and K. Natarajan carried on his work in Bombay. The new ideal woman was neither Sita or Mary, but rather that of the humanist European tradition, a personality in her own right, a partner in the home and a cherisher of the family, an upholder of grace and culture in society, and an actor in public causes. It was accepted by the advanced classes of both communities who searched their scriptures for supporting texts rather than sought to mould their attitude on orthodox opinion.

It was inevitable that women should seek to express their new ideals in the political as well as other spheres and that their movement should link itself with the political embodiment of the new India, the National Congress. The All-India Women's Conference, founded in 1926, soon took on a political tinge, becoming an unofficial Congress auxiliary. But it remained true to its cause, securing the foundation of the Lady Irwin College in New Delhi. The political cause of women received an impetus from the Montford reforms which led to their enfranchisement on the same terms as men.[1] Though their voting

[1] As a result of the Muddiman Committee Report in 1925.

power was small because of the property qualification, this marked the real beginning of their participation in public life. The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930–1 gave a further fillip to the movement, for the enthusiasm it aroused led thousands of secluded ladies on to the streets as demonstration marchers, pickets of liquor shops, and so on. Some 2,000 suffered imprisonment for political reasons from 1930 to 1932. Urban Hindu society has never been quite the same since. At the same time a group of brilliant women gave both distinction to their cause and lustre to their sex. The most remarkable was perhaps Mrs. Sarojini Naidu with her combination of personality, wit, eloquence, and literary grace. Mrs. Lakshmi Pandit later attained world fame, while the Begam Shah Nawaz in the Panjab revived memories of Mughul princesses.

In the second half of the century the government left with increasing relief the moral side of improvement to unofficial agencies, while it concentrated on the material. It was the great age of public works. Dalhousie, the creator of the public works department, was as enthusiastic for these as for annexation. Lawrence ran into deficits for their sake. He introduced the principle of borrowing for productive works which was first regularized and then extended by his successors. Foremost amongst these was the railways, which developed from 200 miles of track in 1857 to 40,000 by 1940. They have already been considered in the last chapter. They made welfare possible rather than being themselves welfare measures. Here mention may be made of two great designs of direct material benefit. The first of these is irrigation. Irrigation is an age-old art in India. The early British observers found many ruined tanks built by south Indian kings and many which were still in use.[1] Fīrūz Shah Tughluq built a canal to Hissar which Shahjahan repaired and extended to Delhi. Even the Sikhs built a few small ones. The first phase, inaugurated by Lord Hastings, was that of restoration. In 1820 water flowed into Delhi once more and the people turned out in gala dress to welcome it. The second was the design of large original works. These were first carried out where water was plentiful, and had the effect of making land where some cultivation was already possible more productive and secure against drought. The first great work of this kind in the north was the Ganges canal, described by Dalhousie in 1856 as 'unequalled in its class and character among the efforts of civilised nations'. In the south the Grand Anicut was built two miles long across the bed of the Cauvery in 1835–6. From 1892 canals were built to irrigate waste land in regions of little or no rainfall. The Panjab and Sind were the chief beneficiaries of this phase which, with its Panjab canals and canal colonies, made the Panjab the most prosperous province of India, and which culminated in the Sukkur barrage in Sind in the nineteen-twenties. The Sukkur barrage, even before its Pakistan extensions, was the largest of its kind in the world; the Godavari system extends over 2,500 miles and the Upper and Lower Ganges canals over 8,000 miles. In the Panjab the area of

[1] It is estimated that there are 4,000 tanks or *erays* in Madras and as many in Mysore.

irrigated land was double that of Egypt. In British India by 1940 32½ million acres or one-fifth of the cultivated area was irrigated land.

The other great welfare work was the development of famine policy. Famines have periodically visited all parts of India through the failure of rains. Little action beyond resignation to the will of nature was possible because of the lack of means of transport and the slowness of that which existed. Akbar attempted some relief but for the most part little was done. The same held good in the first great famine of British India, that of Bengal in 1769–70, which swept off a third to a half of the population. At first relief methods were spasmodic, *ad hoc*, and uncertain. Relief was attempted in the famine of 1837–8 in the upper Ganges and Jumna regions. In 1866 the Orissa famine was estimated to have carried off a quarter of the population through the failure of the Bengal authorities to act in time. The great famine of 1876–8 was attacked energetically but unsystematically. Out of this visitation, however, came Lytton's Commission of 1880 under Sir Richard Strachey, from which came the Famine Code of 1883. The code laid down procedure for detecting the symptoms of food shortage, for declaring first a state of scarcity and then of famine. The main principles were the use of railways and shipping to bring in grain from unaffected areas or from overseas, the regulation of relief and the provision of work of a productive kind for the able-bodied. These new rules were embodied in a series of provincial codes and improved as a result of the Macdonnell Commission's report in 1901 after the series of famines between 1896 and 1900. The Famine Code could not prevent famine, but succeeded in converting the terrible famines of food into more tolerable famines of work. The Famine Code used the new resources of science and planning to deaden the force of India's most terrible scourge.

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CHAPTER 6

The New India—The Indian Response

THE benevolence of an alien government and administrative measures were not in themselves sufficient to create a new India; without the breath of internal life to animate them they would form no more than the dry bones of regeneration. We have therefore to consider the Indian reaction to the government and the measures which came to them from abroad. The first Indian reaction to the Europeans in India was one of curiosity and interest, which in the case of the Portuguese soon turned to hostility. But apart from the coastal regions where Portuguese power had to be reckoned with, curiosity remained the dominant attitude in Mughul times, whether it was Akbar questioning Jesuit missionaries or Jahangir exchanging drinks or pictures with a Hawkins or Sir Thomas Roe. Europeans were people to be used to advantage whether in commerce or war. When in the eighteenth century the Europeans developed military power their help was sought in local conflicts; when their power was seen to be a political menace the reaction was a military one. The rajas and nawabs sought European arms, European systems of discipline and military organization, and European auxiliaries in order to repel the threat from abroad. But they went no further, seeking to borrow just enough from the new alien culture to preserve themselves. The tale ran from Mir Kasim to Ranjit Singh, ending finally at Gujarat in 1849.

By 1820 India as a whole recognized that mere military skill would not exorcise the unwelcome new spirit. Those closest to the British also realized that the western invasion was not to be confined to rulers and soldiers. New British were not to be old Mughuls writ large; by their administrative arrangements and their itch for improvements they were unsettling the old modes of life; while their boundless self-confidence in their civilization made them ready to seize opportunities for introducing it into the country. Only caution as to the consequences and some regard for tradition restrained their eagerness. The restoration of order was to be but the prelude to revolution. From the late eighteenth century when the *vakils* of the country powers had friendly converse with Warren Hastings and Ghulam Husain Khan reflected on the changing times, men were beginning to think out their attitude to this larger threat. The first reaction in both Hindu and Muslim circles was the conservative one. Political submission must not be followed by cultural *hari-kari*. Apart from the borrowing of such externals as European uniforms, furniture, novelties, and wines the attitude was one of aloofness. Rather than share in the new world the

old governing classes withdrew from it. Their refuge in British India was their estates and their memories, elsewhere the courts of the surviving princes. The religious conservatives, whether Brahmans or *maulvis*, took the same line; they opposed innovation and withdrew as far as possible from contact with it. But complete withdrawal was impossible as the interfering measures of Bentinck were followed up by Auckland, Ellenborough, and Dalhousie. A reservoir of emotional distaste was thus collected by such measures as western education, abolition of rent-free tenures for religious purposes, the neglect of Persian, the introduction of the telegraph, steam power, and railways, and Christian activity. From these sources came the popular pressure which lay behind the Mutiny in which it found its outlet.

But there were others who were either more or less far-sighted than the mass of lovers of the old ways. The smallest of the groups was prepared to surrender in the cultural battle as it had done in the political. It existed chiefly in Calcutta. There it was influenced by the rationalism prevalent among the British including the famous watchmaker David Hare and the young Anglo-Indian Derozio, and by the Christian persuasions of Alexander Duff. There was a short-lived movement among young intellectuals to renounce Hinduism and all its works whose outward signs were Christian baptism and beef-eating clubs. As a movement this died away after 1840. The larger movement contained those who, though anxious to remain loyal to their cultural and religious past, realized that religion in its existing state could offer no antidote to the foreign influences. They thus sought to strengthen the old by purifying it, and they would purify by going back to the sources to their faith. They were the Protestant reformers of Hinduism and Islam.

The first of these movements was that of the *Brahmo Samaj* founded by Ram Mohan Roy in 1828.[1] The aim of the group which gathered round Ram Mohan Roy was to meet criticisms of Hinduism by removing the accretions of ages. Ram Mohan Roy went back to the Upanishads for his authority and there he found the principle of reason leading to a lofty intellectual theism. From this citadel he could denounce the evils of latter-day Hinduism such as idolatry and polygamy, suttee and female infanticide. He could also use against European critics their own weapon of reason, with such effect that one missionary became a Unitarian. 'Ram Mohan', says Dr. Farquhar, 'believed he was restoring Hindu worship to its pristine purity.' The *Samaj* was joined by Dwarkanath Tagore, whose son Devendranath became its head; it was developed and disrupted by the wayward genius Keshub Chander Sen; parallel societies were formed in Madras, Bombay, and Lahore. It has remained small but influential, tolerant, and intellectual but lacking in broad popular sympathy. It was the intellectual's rather than everyman's response to the western challenge.

The *Brahmo Samaj* remained a select society, in spite of the efforts of

[1] See Book II, Chapter 7.

Keshub Chander Sen; the *Arya Samaj* was a cult on the old lines. Whereas Ram Mohan Roy went to the Upanishads for his inspiration, the founder of the *Arya Samaj*, Swami Dayananda,[1] relied on the four Vedas. Dayananda was born in 1824 in Gujarat, attained enlightenment by the orthodox process of austerity, and founded his society in 1875. He was devoted, emphatic, and militant. In his return to the primitive scriptures and his pugnacious attitude to Brahmanism he was a Luther to Ram Mohan Roy's Erasmus. He denounced idolatry, polygamy, and caste, preached a return to the simplicity of Vedic ritual and the austerity of Vedic manners, and maintained that all truth was to be found in the four Vedas. The movement proved to have moral vigour. It became an important influence in the Panjab and was active elsewhere. It was a curious mixture of old and new, of breadth and sectarianism. Within Hindu society it attacked Brahman privilege and was a strong reforming influence; without it opposed Islam with bitterness and Christian activity with vigour. Its greatest obstacle was the contradiction between its modern outlook in such things as education and its 'fundamentalist' assumptions. For this reason many who were attracted by its anti-Brahmanism were repelled in turn by its anti-rationalism. The *Samaj* had most appeal in the north, where Brahman influence was not strong, but made little headway in the east and south. It helped to awaken without succeeding in uniting the new India.

A further response to the western challenge came from the followers of Ramkrishna Parahamsa. If Ram Mohan Roy was the mind, Dayananda the physical arm, Ramkrishna was the soul of the new India. Ramkrishna, who spent most of his life at a temple near Calcutta,[2] was a *bhakti* in the great tradition who sought to realize God by the *bhakti mārga* or path of loving devotion. After twelve years of storm he attained peace and spent the rest of his life talking to admirers, disciples, seekers, and the curious. While his personal way was that of self-surrender, his theology was Vedantic. His disciples devoted themselves to the spread of his teaching and found a leader in Swami Vivekananda[3] and a talented follower in the Irishwoman Sister Nivedita.[4] Vivekananda added social service and self-reliance to the traditional Hindu devotion and did much to rehabilitate Hinduism in the eyes of both Indians and the world by his tours and advocacy at the Chicago World Conference of Religions in 1893. His legacy was the Ramkrishna mission which was notable for good works and the view that all religions are at bottom the same. Ramkrishna and his disciples did much to restore Hinduism's confidence in itself and in its status in the world. But Ramkrishna has not proved a new Buddha any more than Dayananda. Perhaps the gulf between his ascetic devotion and the modern

[1] Swami Dayananda died in 1883. Prominent members of the *Arya Samaj* were Lala Lajpat Rai, founder of the Servants of the People Society and Rai Sahib Harbilas Sarda, sponsor of the Sarda Act.

[2] At Dakshineshwar, four miles north of Calcutta. He lived from 1834 to 1886.

[3] Lived 1862–1902.

[4] Miss Margaret Noble. She died in 1911.

world was too great; he did something to fill an emotional void in the soul of modern India, but his real answer to the problems, practical and intellectual, of the new generation, was to withdraw from them. People were inspired and comforted by these men rather than converted by them. They were heralds of the new India rather than its *avatars*.

One more movement may be cited, that of theosophy. The Theosophical Society was founded in 1875 by Madame Blavatsky, a talented and colourful Russian lady. The society was at first a spiritualist one. It attained influence in India under the leadership of Mrs. Annie Besant with its headquarters at Adyar near Madras. Spiritualism led to the *rishis* of the Himalayas as the repositories of spiritual truth. As a cult theosophy was eventually discredited by the controversies which surrounded it, and by the cult of the Messiah of Mrs. Besant's latter days. It was too vague to develop from a fashion or an influence to a sect or a religion. But its influence was nevertheless considerable: its religious syncretism satisfied those who wanted reassurance in the Hindu religion in the face of modern criticism, while its pseudo-intellectualism attracted those who were repelled by the emotionalism of Ramkrishna. It praised Hinduism in western terms without demanding any particular action. For this reason it had much vogue among the westernized classes during the early years of the century. Mrs. Besant became a figure in public affairs. With Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya she founded the Benares Hindu University and had her hour of political fame as the creator of the Home Rule League in 1915. But the movement was too shallow to take deep root and too lacking in a positive programme to carry the country with it for long. It was another milestone on the Indian path to nationhood.

In the Muslim community similar movements were stirring though they were a full generation behind those within Hindu society. The Muslims had lost temporal dominion and inner self-confidence at the same moment and for some time seemed too stunned to be able to recover. But the same pattern can be traced, though it took shape more slowly and at a later date. There were the *Wahabis*[1] of Patna and Moradabad with their call to the puritan simplicity of primitive Islam. There was the heterodox Ahmadiya movement[2] of Qadian in the Panjab with its affinities with Bahaism in Persia. And there was the synthetic mind of Sayyid Ahmad Khan,[3] who sought to reconciie the spirit of Islam with that of the modern West. In some ways his work was easier than that of Ram Mohan Roy because there was much more common ground between western and Islamic than between western and Hindu ideas. In other ways it was more difficult because Muslims were more hostile to the West than Hindus as their political sup-

[1] The title came from resemblance to rather than identity with the Arabian movement of that name.

[2] Founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (*c.* 1838–1908) about 1879.

[3] 1815–98.

planters, were less educated and so less open to new ideas, and were more deeply bound by tradition. Sayyid Ahmad Khan's great achievement was the foundation in 1875 of the Anglo-Arabic College at Aligarh, later to become the Aligarh Muslim university. The development of modern Islam in India will be treated more fully in a later chapter.[1]

The cult which eventually united the new westernized classes was the un-Indian one of nationalism. The mind which made this possible was that of Ram Mohan Roy. For this reason he may be described as the greatest creative personality of nineteenth-century India. For he was much more than the founder of the *Brahmo Samaj* and an active public figure. During his seventeen years of public activity between 1813 and 1830 he laid down the main lines of advance for what was to become the Indian national movement. His attitude towards the West was neither that of surrender, withdrawal, or conflict. It was one of comprehension. The new world from the West was not to be a substitute but a supplement to the old. Synthesis, which is different to syncretism, was his remedy for the predicament of Hinduism. The instrument of synthesis was reason, the principle he found enshrined in the Upanishads. Once this was accepted the western challenge could be met face to face. Western loans would not involve eastern apostasy; loyalty and reform could go hand in hand. On this basis he accepted theism as an Upanishadic doctrine; he accepted individuality from the same source, and with it the whole liberal gospel of political rights. He held a dinner to celebrate the 1830 revolution in France. His treatment of suttee was characteristic. He condemned it on moral grounds, but at the same time supported his position by quotations from sacred texts while refuting those quoted by his opponents. A Hindu could accept the moral rationalism of the West because real Hinduism was both moral and rational. We are not here concerned with the ultimate validity of this contention as with its historical relevance; it provided the rising westernized class with just that bridge between their old and new mental worlds which they needed.

It is now time to turn to the fortunes of this class itself. The old middle class of India played a very subordinate part in the affairs of India. It was divided by distance, by language, by caste feeling, and by occupation. It had no common consciousness and was dependent everywhere on the intellectual aristocracy of the Brahmans and the landed aristocracy of *sardars* and *zamindars*. The merchant had little in common with the government official, or the doctor with the lawyer. Each profession or vocation was insulated from others by walls of custom and prejudice. No common consciousness was possible until this exclusiveness between upper and lower, between group and group was broken down. The first step in the process was taken by the British in their earlier years, by the removal or setting aside of the old upper classes. Their political encroachments culminated in the exclusion of

[1] Book IV, Chapter 5: the Pakistan movement.

higher Indian agency in government service by Cornwallis in 1793. The old rulers retired in proud poverty to muse on past glories and saw no reason for learning a foreign language which could lead to no honourable employment. The new land settlements tended also to eclipse the old landed gentry. Polygars disappeared in Madras, *zamindaris* changed hands in Bengal, *jagirs* were reduced and the holders of rent-free tenures found their rights called in question.[1] Those that survived could hope for no suitable government employment and their local influence was steadily whittled away by the clipping of their legal and revenue powers. These people could not obtain suitable public employment and would not equip themselves for a place in the new order by taking up western education.

The way was thus cleared for the middle class. The cover, as it were, was taken off Indian society and with it the old limits to their aspirations. But at first development was one-sided and capricious. The first groups to benefit were the merchants and financiers at the seats of British power, the go-betweens of the new order. Many of the more successful purchased *zamindaris* as they lapsed after the Permanent Settlement of 1793. Merchants in general profited by the new security. There was a rush to learn English from these classes at the British ports, for what were in most cases freely admitted to be business reasons. But there was yet no solidarity with other sections of the class. *Bania* or *sowarkar* had no truck with *kayasth* or *khattri*, or *hakim* and *vaid* with *maulvi* and *pandit*. There were no common bonds, no spiritual links. It was these which the next batch of British measures in the thirties were to provide—the reforms of Bentinck and his successors. The official teaching of English was a utilitarian measure, and was welcomed as such even by the conservative Raja Radhakant Deb. But with it went western knowledge and science so that with the new language came knowledge of the new world. The transition from Persian to English as the language of government business and the higher courts greatly increased the use and so the demand for English. Presently came with Dalhousie the great expansion of schools and colleges under the grant-in-aid system (from 1854).

With this increased demand for English in subordinate posts went the rise of new professions which offered scope and status to men of ability. The new colleges and schools required teachers whose position in society was honourable. The new legal system required professional lawyers, who again were men of independence and position. The profession of western medicine was introduced with Bentinck's Calcutta Medical College. In the administration itself opportunities of service were widening with the opening of higher services to Indian appointment and the increasing prestige of lesser offices like those of *tahsildar*. The advance of western techniques created further openings for the enterprising in the railways (from 1856), the public works departments, the engineering, forest, and other services. All these services

[1] Under Bentinck and specially by the Imam Commission of Bombay.

were closed to those too proud to serve in subordinate positions but offered enlargement to those anxious to make their way. Thus the upper class continued to hold aloof and the middle class to expand and profit. Even Lytton's statutory civil service failed to attract the former, but its successor, the provincial service, was eagerly sought after by the latter. It was a grand administrative example of the meek inheriting the earth.

Not only was the middle class stimulated and expanded by the new opportunities; it was drawn together as never before. The new education gave it a common language and common stock of ideas and knowledge to be held side by side with its various sectional traditions. The new press continued their contact with the new mental world and enabled their own reactions to it to circulate. The new communications enabled Madras to talk to Delhi and Bombay to meet with Calcutta. Thus in the fifty years between the new education policy and the Ilbert Bill was born from the middle stratum of society a new integrated all-India class with varied background but a common foreground of knowledge, ideas, and values. Of course it was a minority of Indian society. But the important thing about it was that it was a dynamic minority. It had a sense of unity, of purpose, and of hope. It was the newborn soul of modern India. In time it was to infuse the whole of India with its spirit.

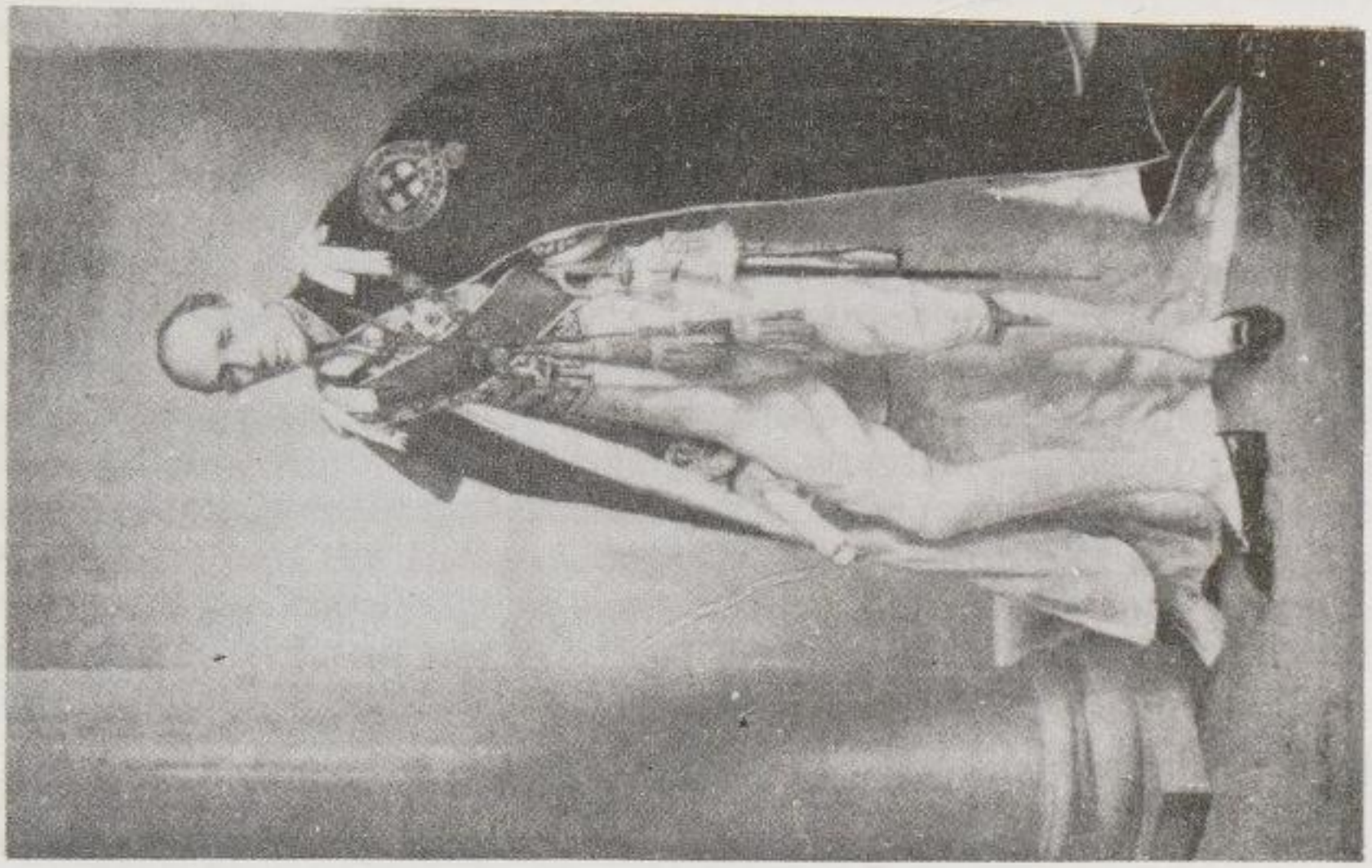
It was inevitable that this new class should aspire to a political expression of its views. The whole European liberal movement of the nineteenth century was keyed in political terms; in thinking in these terms the new class was only practising the precepts it had received. It was also inevitable that there should be some friction between alien governors and native governed. The one was not likely to want to retire at exactly the same pace as the other wished to advance. The relevant questions were how much, for how long, and with what results. We have seen that the British from the thirties envisaged eventual self-government, but that after the Mutiny their definition of 'eventual' became decidedly elastic. There was thus clearly a community of ultimate aims with an early difference in the matter of pace. But two other factors intervened. In the first place the British looked for the leaders of the new India in the wrong direction. The earlier administrators assumed that the leaders would come from the old governing class. Elphinstone's proposed Indianization of a Bombay district was to be carried out by this class, and so were Malcolm's similar suggestions; Dalhousie looked to this class for an Indian appointment to his new Legislative Council; Henry Lawrence staked his whole career on the regeneration of the Sikh *sardars*; Canning drew on this class for the first Indian appointments to the new Legislative Council in 1862; and Lytton looked to them to man his statutory civil service. When it was clear that they were not forthcoming from this class in any number many British officials ceased to look any farther. When political gestures began to come from the new middle-class these men refused to

regard them as valid. Can any good thing come out of Nazareth, was their attitude. Henceforth British opinion, both in India and England, was divided on the genuineness of the middle class national movement. Before 1914 the majority view minimized its importance; it was only at the end of the nineteen-twenties, and largely as a result of the efforts of Lord Halifax, that a consensus of British opinion accepted the Indian national movement as the major political fact of Indian life. In the second place, as the country became settled, British officials tended to concern themselves less and less with politics and more and more with administration. The aim of efficiency in government tended to replace that of understanding the people. There was so much to do that there was less time to confer and consider. Speakers and leaders with little public experience, whose ideas of public affairs came from the liberal literature of Europe and Britain, seemed to them to be impractical dreamers. There was here a clash of temperament which in the circumstances was unavoidable.

The new class found its growth stimulated by the opposite ingredients of encouragement and opposition. On the positive side was the attitude of the more far-sighted governor-generals from Bentinck downwards, declarations like the Charter Act of 1833 and the Queen's Proclamation of 1858, the first steps in the Indianization of the legislature, the judiciary, and the services, and the growing support of liberal opinion in England. The influence of Gladstone in this respect was most important. Another encouraging factor, in that it increased feelings of self-respect, was the new interest in Indian culture and letters in Europe, which, beginning with the work of Sir Williams Jones in the late eighteenth century, spread throughout Europe in the nineteenth. On the reverse side there was the impatience engendered by the tardiness and modesty of the Indianization process; there was the resentment aroused by the keen criticism of Indian institutions and the widespread assumption that they were barbarous rather than civilized;[1] there was, specially in western India, resentment at what was thought to be unfair commercial discrimination, and there was the bitterness aroused by the racial slights to which the lower ranks of Europeans were increasingly addicted.

The first centre of political action was the eloquent and volatile world of Calcutta. Discussions on ethics and social reforms easily passed on into politics. The first body which can be called political was the British Indian Association founded in the forties. It was a decorous body of landowners, concerned mainly with safeguarding its own interests, which expressed preferences rather than made demands. In 1876 the Indian Association was formed by Surendranath Bannerjea who had become a teacher after a brief career in the civil service. He joined organizing ability to eloquence, and soon found objects to absorb his energies. The lowering of the age of entrance to the civil

[1] See J. Mill, *History of India*, Books II and III. Macaulay and indeed many Liberals were sinners in this respect.



b. Lord Irwin

a. Lord Curzon

service (thus further prejudicing Indian chances of entry) was the first of these and enabled him to found branch associations. Lytton's Press Act of 1878 provided another and still more popular issue.

Then came Ripon as the harbinger of Gladstonianism to India. If he had been a more forceful character he would not have prevented the formation of Congress but he might have strengthened those elements which wished to achieve their ideals in harmonious co-operation with the British. His first measures raised both the self-confidence and the prestige of the new nationalists. Then came the Ilbert Bill controversy, with its bitter expression of racial antagonism and suspicion, its flouting of authority and its well-organized agitation among the non-official European community of Bengal. This was the spur which finally drove the young nationalists to decided action, the reagent which precipitated the solution of the Indian Congress. The example of successful agitation, and the knowledge of such bodies as the Anti-Corn Law League and the Irish Land and National Leagues produced action on similar lines.

The first meeting of the Indian National Congress took place in Bombay in December 1885. It was supported at the outset by a group of liberal-minded Englishmen, including A. O. Hume, son of the radical Joseph Hume and a retired civil servant, Sir W. Wedderburn, Sir David Yule, and later Sir Henry Cotton.[1] The first session comprised only seventy members, who had elected themselves by paying a small fee. They were mainly lawyers, journalists, and schoolmasters. The second session contained nearly 450 members chosen by public meetings and bodies. From that time there was no looking back. The Congress became an annual large-scale conference containing representatives from all communities and all provinces. The only group which noticeably held back was the Muslim under the advice of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan; democratic government, he said, would be government by Hindus. The Congress soon developed its organization of annual president, working committee, general committee, and full session, its procedure of presidential address, debates, and resolutions. It organized a network of local branches, it developed its own *ethos* or atmosphere. It soon became a party without ceasing to be a movement and around it grew up a circle of sympathizers more numerous than its actual membership. Outside the great cities membership was still something of an adventure and mere attendance at its meetings required an act of will.

The attitude of the government to this development was cautious but not unfriendly. Lord Dufferin recognized something of its significance and gave it a remote and olympian blessing. He used its rise as an occasion for pressing for an extension of the council system which led, after four years of discussion, to the Indian Councils Act of 1892. Though this by no means satisfied all, it had certain concrete results. The fact of election, disguised as recommendation for nomination,

[1] Three Englishmen were Presidents of Congress between 1885 and 1900.

opened the door for the entry of Congressmen into these hitherto aristocratic purlieus. G. K. Gokhale entered the central Legislative Council and soon became one of its outstanding members. The enlargement of the council's powers to include a discussion on the budget enabled questions of general policy as well as particular proposals to be discussed. Gokhale's annual budget speech at Calcutta became, with the Congress president's inaugural address, the twin political event of the new nationalist world.

Within Congress itself trends and strains soon developed. At the outset the prevailing influence was Gladstonian liberalism with some tincture of Italian idealism.[1] This long remained the dominant school, but there was from the beginning another current which looked upon liberalism as a means rather than an end. Their end, like that of their colleagues, was self-government, but their concept of its form was more Indian than European, more traditional than democratic. From the beginning Bombay played an equal part with Calcutta in shaping the Congress destinies. The second president was the Parsi liberal Dadabhai Naoraji, who was also for some years a Liberal member of the British Parliament, and the third was a Bombay Muslim. It was in Bombay that the tension between the two views first became evident. It was embodied in the persons of two Chitpavan Brahmans of Poona, G. K. Gokhale, the disciple of Justice Ranade, and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the editor of the Marathi newspaper *Kesari*. Tilak looked backward to Sivaji and the glories of Maratha empire, while Gokhale looked forward to parliamentary rule based on liberal rationalism. The difference of view was revealed in the Bombay plague crisis of 1897 when Tilak encouraged orthodox resistance to measures of health precaution, praised Sivaji's violence on Afzal Khan as being above the moral law, and was imprisoned for incitement to disaffection. Thus began the divison between moderates and extremists.

Thus by the end of the century, within fifteen years of its foundation, the members of the Congress had seized the initiative in internal Indian affairs. The class from which they sprang was described by Lord Dufferin in 1888 as a 'microscopic minority'. The statement was statistically correct; what mattered was that this small and thinly spread group had become possessed of a creative idea, which was eventually to give them the leadership of the dormant masses and the drugged upper classes. The minority was creative and dynamic. It was a leaven which would leaven the whole lump. And the leaven was principally a western leaven.

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[1] Many of the early leaders, including Surendranath Bannerjea, were admirers of Mazzini.

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CHAPTER 7

The States

IN this chapter it is proposed to make a rapid survey of the relations of Company and Crown with the Indian states. The first intention of the East India Company was to have nothing to do with governing. If there was an Indian government capable of providing security, they would operate under its wing; if not, they would operate *through* the nearest available government. Until 1750 the Mughul government provided the first alternative. Thereafter the Company tried for fifty years to operate *through* the Carnatic government instead of superseding it. It was only after folly and mischief on both sides had so loaded the nawab with debt that nearly the whole of his revenue was assigned to pay the interest that the administration was taken over in 1801. Clive went to Bengal intending to act *through* and not *over* the *subadari* as Bussy had successfully done in Hyderabad. It was his own unwisdom after Plassey and the failure of the Company to control its servants which converted a military supremacy into a *de facto* administration. In the west the Bombay government was not able to infiltrate into Maharashtra as had been done elsewhere; its acquisitions were by annexation and were confined to such limited areas as Salsette and Broach.

We may reckon that the Company first possessed a defined territorial empire in India from 1765, the date of the Mughul grant of the *diwani* to Clive. From this date began the Company's relations with dependent Indian states apart from the two cases just mentioned. The first case was that of Oudh. This state from 1765 was in a state of dependence because its nawab Shuja-ud-daula had been restored by Clive when a fugitive after the battle of Baksar. The price was a payment of 50 *lakhs* and a treaty of mutual assistance. The terms seemed fair enough, but in fact the position was one-sided, because it was always the Nawab Wazir who needed help. The help meant troops on the frontier, and the troops had to be paid for. Therefore his dependence deepened though he remained nominally independent, until in 1801 Wellesley annexed half the state in commutation of arrears of subsidy, leaving Oudh completely surrounded by Company's territory except on the side of Nepal. Other treaties before 1798 including those with the Nizam were made on a basis of equal status.

The real creation of dependent states dates from Lord Wellesley's governor-generalship. Mysore was conquered and handed over to its old Hindu rulers on terms of subordination. Half of Oudh was annexed and the rest insulated. But Wellesley's main instrument was the system

of subsidiary treaties which was first practised on the Nizam and whose working has been explained in Book I, Chapter 10. The essentials were the planting of a subsidiary force within the prince's dominions for his defence against attack which was paid for by the prince himself. Wellesley intended to use this method as an instrument for securing the Company's paramountcy throughout India; in fact the resistance of Holkar and the Jats ruled that it should be a step towards supremacy only. Here again the treaties were still ostensibly with equal powers; there was limitation of foreign relations but no interference with internal sovereignty. The Nizam used the royal 'we' in correspondence and was addressed in terms implying superior rank until 1829.

The next step came in 1818 with the crushing of the Pindaris and the Peshwa, the pacification of central India, and the admission of the Rajput states to the British system. To the nominally independent states with subsidiary treaties and the few avowedly dependent ones like Mysore were now added both a number of ancient principalities like the Rajput princes and small chiefships which had never known anything but dependence. Some of them, like Amir Khan's state of Tonk, represented an adventurer's gains recognized for the sake of tranquillity; others like Firozpur were grants made in reward for services rendered.

The states as a whole covered more than a third of the area of British India. Their exact relationship to the new government exercised the best minds amongst the Company's servants. Metcalfe argued that the government should claim the rights of paramountcy as the heir of the Mughuls but the matter was never fully thought out and decided. The policy actually adopted was that known as subordinate isolation. The states were subordinate to the supreme government in their foreign relations, any move towards independence being promptly dealt with.[1] But internally they were recognized as sovereign and there was as little interference as possible. Even in the case of Mysore, which was a subordinate state created by treaty, misgovernment did not lead to annexation but to the taking over of the administration. In Oudh misgovernment produced frequent and urgent remonstrance; in Hyderabad interference occurred on account of chronic arrears of subsidy payments. In general the grounds of interference were financial rather than administrative. A striking example of this policy was Dalhousie's refusal to interfere in the civil war of succession in Bahawalpur State.

The next great change came with Dalhousie. It may here be convenient to cite Dalhousie's classification of states, as modified by Sir Charles Wood, then President of the Board of Control, in 1854.[2]

First. States which have from a time antecedent to our rule been independent or quasi-independent, not tributary or owing their nominal allegiance to any superior.

[1] e.g. Auckland's annexation of Kurnul and Bentinck's of Coorg.
[2] Sir W. Lee-Warner, *Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie*, vol. ii, pp. 155–6.

Secondly. States dating from a similar period, but owing origin distinctly to a grant from some authority to which we have succeeded.
Thirdly. States owing their origin to our grant or gift.

During the thirty years which had passed since 1818 the climate of British opinion about Indian states had changed. The former relief at having a large part of India removed from the direct responsibility of the government had been replaced by uneasiness about conditions within the states. The first object of government had been security and tranquillity and for these purposes subordinate states were convenient and inexpensive instruments. But now the concern was not only government but good government, not only security but welfare. And the conviction was strong that the only good government was British government, that the only way to promote welfare was through British agents. Dalhousie voiced this conviction in his famous declaration.[1]

I take this opportunity of recording my strong and deliberate opinion, that in the exercise of a wise and sound policy the British Government is bound not to put aside or neglect such rightful opportunities of acquiring territory or revenue as may from time to time present themselves, whether they arise from the lapse of subordinate states by the failure of all heirs of every description whatsoever, or from the failure of heirs natural where the succession can be sustained only by the sanction of the Government being given to the ceremony of adoption according to Hindu law.

From this standpoint he developed his annexation policy, both by reason of lapse and other grounds. Though Dalhousie avowedly limited the application of lapse to subordinate states, it so happened that his annexations on general grounds were even more extensive than those on account of lapse. Colour was therefore given to the fear that annexation would not stop short at subordinate states, and that if one pretext would not serve another would be found. The details of Dalhousie's measures are dealt with in Book II, Chapter 8.

The Mutiny put an end to these plans and these fears. Both the danger of tampering with established loyalties and the value of those loyalties to the government were realized. The concept of subordinate isolation was replaced by that of subordinate union. The states were no longer considered to be stagnant backwaters apart from the main river of Indian life of which a reforming government was rather ashamed, and whom many expected to be eventually united with the parent stream. They were now to be integral parts of the whole intricate system of Indian political waterways. Canning's description of them as breakwaters in the storm illustrated the new appreciation of their value. Several steps were taken to implement the new attitude. The first measure was one which should have been taken many years previously. Along with the abolition of the Company's government the Crown stood out as the paramount power of India as the successor

[1] Minute of 30 Aug. 1848. He explained later that he was referring to dependent states only. But the minute stands as an expression of the new outlook.

of the Mughuls. The link between the government and the princes was henceforth direct, personal, and intimate. The assumption of the imperial title by the queen in 1876, along with the pageantry of Lytton and the subsequent Delhi Durbars, served but to dramatize the new relationship. The princes were now regarded, in the Mughul fashion, as an order instead of as a number of obsolescent survivals. The heads of the Arcot and Oudh families were given the title of prince and others were admitted to the orders of chivalry. Lytton projected an Indian peerage. Against the Crown they had no rights, but beneath its shelter they enjoyed its fostering care.

The new position was underlined by Lord Curzon when he said at Bahawalpur, 'the sovereignty of the Crown is everywhere unchallenged; it has itself laid down the limitations of its own prerogative'.[1] It was stated for the last time by Lord Reading in dealing with a Hyderabad claim when he said 'the sovereignty of the Crown is supreme in India'.[2]

The next step was to remove the specific grievances which had been agitating the princes. The doctrine of lapse was explicitly abandoned and *sanads* recognizing the right of adoption issued by Lord Canning. Further the integrity of the princely territories was guaranteed. Not only did annexations come to an end but there were actual additions in certain cases. Grants of land were made as rewards for loyalty during the Mutiny. The Mysore State was handed back to its raja in 1881 after fifty years of sequestration, and the *zamindari* of Benares was elevated to statehood in 1912. Lord Curzon's transactions over the Berars with the Nizam in 1903 only made more binding what had already been done by Dalhousie. When misgovernment became acute the remedy was no longer absorption but a period of British administration under a regency.

These measures and this new attitude transformed the relations of British and Indian India. For the pathetic dependence, latent suspicion, and sometimes veiled hostility of the past were substituted in general a spirit of confidence and positive co-operation. The princes felt that they had a future once more, and the best of them rose to the occasion. One sign of this new confidence on both sides was the formation of the Imperial Service Corps by Lord Dufferin. Under this scheme units were raised by princes and officered by Indians pledged to imperial service when required. They proved their military worth in both world wars and numbered some 27,000 at the outbreak of the second. Another was the participation of the princes in imperial events like Queen Victoria's jubilee and her successors' coronations as well as in Indian ones like the Durbars. After the first World War, when India became a member of the League of Nations, princes like the Rajas of Bikanir and Patiala took a share in her international representation. The opinion may be hazarded that if Britain had followed the Mughul example more closely and pushed co-operation still further the results

[1] Sir T. Raleigh (ed.), *Lord Curzon in India*, p. 227.
[2] Declaration of 22 Mar. 1926.

might have been even more striking. The federal scheme of 1935 might then well have been implemented with incalculable results for later development.

Along with the new outlook went a change in the character or tone of the princely order. For fifty years after the Mutiny the spirit of both British and Indian India was the same, that of paternalism. Paternalism in British India could now be matched by benevolent despotism in the states. It was an imperial interest to see that this benevolence should be in the new fashion rather than the old. This the government endeavoured to achieve by example, by encouragement, and by education. Princes were encouraged to educate their cadets along European lines, to study modern methods of administration, and to enlarge their horizons by travel. Lord Mayo founded chiefs' colleges whose discipline was perhaps but a shadow of that of the public schools of England, but which possessed a distinct spirit and exercised a positive influence nevertheless. The old type of prince, nurtured in the *zenana* and softened by traditional vices without being tempered by the traditional hazards of war and politics, gave place in many cases to the man of modern outlook regarding his domains as an estate to be improved. Princely modernism might be vicious as well as benevolent, leading to Parisian nightlights rather than the administrator's desk; sometimes it did both. But a new class of men was to be found among the princes just as a new spirit was to be found in the states themselves. Before the Mutiny capable princes were rare and effective ministers like Sir Salar Jung and Sir Dinkar Rao occasional. Afterwards princes matched ministers and the efforts of both were furthered by loans and exchanges with British India. Sir Chamo Rajendra of Mysore (1868–96) and his son Krishna Raja, the Gaekwar Sayaji Rao (1875–1936), Sir Madhu Rao Sindia of Gwalior (1886–1925), and Sir Ganga Singh of Bikanir (1887–1934), were examples of the new type of forward looking princes, while three successive Begams of Bhopal[1] matched on the Muslim side the eighteenth-century fame of Ahalya Bai of Indore for wisdom and benevolence. Diwans were no longer a race apart; but included men trained in the British administrative school like R. C. Dutt, Sir Akbar Hydari, and Sir Mirza Ismail, and public men from British India like Dadabhai Naoraji. Progress was not equal. Many small states and some larger ones remained feudal and primitive like Udaipur in Rajputana; but in others like Baroda and Mysore the standard of administration equalled and in some respects surpassed that current in British India. A well-administered Indian state exhibited an attractive blend of tradition and progress and led many to believe that this was the true path of Indian progress to modernity. These were the men to whom Malcolm and Elphinstone would have looked for the eventual self-government of India. But they came too late, were encouraged too little, were too spasmodic in their efforts and too confined in their limits; by the time that they had begun to achieve results

[1] Nawab Sikandar Begam, Shah Jahan Begam, and Sultan Jahan Begam.

and to claim notice, another class had seized the initiative and bathed in the troubled waters of nationalism.

But if the princes had gained security, a larger outlook, and a new sense of mission, they had also to submit to greater interference than formerly and to certain curtailments of their power. The legal basis of this was the doctrine of paramountcy or the royal prerogative taken over from the Mughuls, together with treaty obligations interpreted in the light of the new position. Between complete non-interference and the actual taking over of a state there was a large field for advice and interference. A corollary of paramountcy was the right of intervention in the event of misgovernment. Subordinate independence or autonomy involved constructive interference. If the paramount power cast its imperial cloak over the princes, it was also entitled to see that what was sheltered was in the main creditable. This stretching of treaty rights to secure the approximation of practice to precept was called 'constructive interpretation'. A final reason for intervention, again stemming from paramountcy and its obligation of protection, was considerations of defence. Some of these forms of interference and some of the developments of imperial powers within the states may now be noted.

General influence was exercised within the states by the resident. Formerly he interfered as little as possible in internal matters and was chiefly moved to act when state finances fell into disorder and arrears of subsidies piled up. Men of exceptional moral force like Charles Metcalfe and Sir Henry Lawrence exercised an important personal influence, but they were rather the exceptions that proved the rule. But in the new order the resident's advice could be given on all points; it was continuous and pervasive. In some cases he became the practical ruler of the state,[1] in some a healthy partnership in reform developed, in some friction, intrigue, and suppressed resentment. Apart from this general influence there were certain distinct powers exercised by the supreme government. There was the right of recognizing and regulating the succession. Successions had to be confirmed by the supreme power as in Mughul times. In Hindu states the recognition of the right of adoption carried with it the approval of the adoption made. In doubtful cases the succession was regulated as in the Kashmir case of 1885, the Gwalior regency case of 1876, and the Alwar case of 1870. The paramount right of enforcing good government involved the possibility of deposition or enforced abdication. This was the final weapon in the supreme government's armoury, and it was used sparingly and with reluctance. An early case was Bentinck's assumption of the Mysore administration in 1831 which was restored fifty years later. The Gaekwar of Baroda was deposed in 1876 for an alleged attempt to poison the resident. Later, in 1903, the abdication of Tukoji Rao Holkar of Indore was enforced because he was held to be responsible for murder within his state. In 1926 his son suffered a similar fate for comparable actions.

[1] King Edward VII as Prince of Wales in 1876 commented unfavourably on the behaviour of some residents.

In 1921 the aged Rana of Udaipur was induced to delegate his ruling powers to his son. The next year the Sikh ruler of Nabha was removed for a variety of misdemeanours as was the ruler of Alwar in 1933. Few of these actions of government appear unduly harsh in the perspective of time; criticism has rather taken the other tack that the government did not interfere often and early enough. The ruler of Patiala was thought by many to have been lucky in this respect in the late twenties.

Imperial authority within the states was extended in a variety of ways. Military considerations procured the establishment of military cantonments and civil stations of which the most famous were perhaps those of Bangalore in Mysore and Secunderabad in Hyderabad. The state forces were limited in number, but their quality and prestige was much increased by the institution of the Imperial Service Corps already referred to. Railway lines necessary for trunk communications or strategical reasons were driven through states, though states in their turn were free to develop their own systems, as in Hyderabad and Mysore. Posts and telegraphs were similarly established in the smaller states and coinage replaced by the Indian rupee. Sea customs were controlled. State subjects were bound to direct obedience to the paramount power. Abroad the interests of states were cared for by the British government, while they in their turn were bound by all treaties made with foreign powers.

The parallel development of British paternalism and princely benevolent despotism lasted broadly until the early years of the century. Its most striking period was the Curzon era when the paternal idea received its most forceful expression. The energy of Lord Curzon extended to the field of the states, his reforming impetus was felt in the form of increased interference. Curzon's most striking act was a fresh arrangement with the Nizam in 1903 by which Berar was virtually incorporated in British India under the fiction of a perpetual lease. The Nizam professed to be satisfied at the time but later claimed that he had been the victim of pressure. This act was too reminiscent of Dalhousie (who had made the first Berar arrangement in 1853) to be agreeable to the princes, and revived old suspicions of encroachment. The next two Viceroys removed these fears by tactful treatment. The outbreak of the first World War in 1914 marked the crowning moment of the post-Mutiny state policy. The confidence and satisfaction of the princes produced a great outburst of loyal expressions and offers of service; the improved conditions of the states made their service of real value and the new quality of princely leadership made it possible for princes like Bikanir to lead their own contingents in the field and take part in imperial events like the Imperial War Conference of 1917.

This was the great moment of princely India. From this time, though it did not become immediately apparent, the paths of British and Indian India began to diverge. With the government declaration of 1917 the government of India was committed to the development of representative institutions and the eventual self-government of British

India. The princes, on the other hand, retained their ideal of enlightened despotism and never as a body or with any enthusiasm accepted the new ideas of constitutional evolution.[1] The princes feared the democratic National Congress as a threat to their positions as autocrats; they discouraged Congress activity within their dominions and Congress in turn was critical of their régime (except for tactical purposes when subject to British interference). The princes therefore tended to lean on the British authority and to stress their treaty rights. Their previous confidence and forward-mindedness was gradually replaced by nervousness for the future and insistence on their vested interests.[2] Vision was darkened by foreboding. In spite of outward appearances the two Indias began again to draw apart with results which proved disastrous to the princes as an order and of doubtful value to their peoples as a whole.

The supreme government on its side found itself in a difficult position. Fidelity to treaty rights dictated support for the princes, while the new democratic policy for British India ran against the whole spirit of the old India. Support of the princes could be denounced as inconsistent or Machiavellian; while their forcible liberalization or abandonment would certainly have been a breach of trust. In these circumstances a double policy was attempted. Princely rights were maintained, sometimes at the cost of considerable embarrassment as in the case of the Patiala agitation of the twenties and the Kashmir agitation of the thirties. At the same time the policy of integration of Indian India was pursued and the attempt made to induce the princes to liberalize their governments. It was to be revolution by persuasion. The Montford reforms concerned British India only but at the same time the Chamber of Princes was established. Its annual meetings at Delhi and its standing committee were instruments for bringing the princes more closely in touch with government policy and with the new national trends. Similarly the princes were associated with all-India affairs as representatives at the League of Nations and imperial conferences. It was hoped in this way to encourage the development of corporate feeling and a common mind amongst the princes and to convert them to the necessity of adapting themselves in time to the new Indian order. The more far-sighted of the princes like the Maharajah of Bikanir and the Jam Sahibs of Nawanagar read the signs of the times, but others, like the Nizam, held aloof and clung to their traditional isolation. The Nizam himself put in a claim to be regarded as an independent state which was disallowed by Lord Reading in 1926. Between the desire to meet the new situation boldly and the desire to take advantage of the difficulties of the British to retain as much independence as possible the princes failed to evolve either a common policy or a united front.

[1] Those which went farthest along this road were Mysore, Baroda, and Travancore.

[2] The Butler Committee Report of 1929 illustrated this.

The policy of evolution or integration achieved its greatest success at the first Round Table Conference when the princes agreed to enter an all-India federation. This meant the surrender of federal powers to an all-India executive and legislature; it meant also that the princes would in future be an integral part of the new Indian state and would be able to exercise a vital influence on all-India affairs. This was a revolutionary conception for it was nothing less than the marriage of British and Indian India. The new principle was embodied in the Government of India Act of 1935 which gave to the princes the right to nominate one-third of the members of the lower house or Federal Assembly, and two-fifths of the upper house or Council of State. In order to safeguard the princes' treaty rights, however, it was stipulated that accession should be voluntary, and that the central federal machinery should not come into being until princes controlling half the princely seats in the Council of State and ruling half the subjects of Indian India should accede to it. This gave the waverers, the doubters, and the outright opponents of federation amongst the princes the chance not only to avoid accession themselves, but to suspend the operation of the federal centre for the rest of India. This chance they seized and successfully avoided a decision until the second World War broke out in 1939. A second, though less spontaneous, display of loyalty could not hide the fact that the princes as a whole, by their withdrawal from the undertakings of 1931, had not only blocked the orderly evolution of their own order, but had held up that of British India as well. Their action meant that India entered on this great crisis without the new central representative organs and without even a partially representative executive. They thus forfeited the sympathy both of the British whom they had baulked in their design of coming to terms with Indian nationalism, and of the Indian nationalists themselves, who now saw in the princes nothing but obstinate opponents of their aspirations. But nationalism was now too strong to be held up by these means. The inevitable result of the princes' intransigence was that the movement proceeded without them. In the final constitutional discussions they were virtually ignored. British paramountcy was simply withdrawn, and the princes were left alone to make what terms they could. What might have been a dignified assumption of a commanding position in the new India became a disorderly scramble for pensions and personal privileges.

The attempt to integrate the old India with the new, first by inducing the princes to modernize their governments and then by persuading them to liberalize them, must therefore be pronounced a failure. To a large extent the princes were themselves responsible because of their short-sightedness, their sectional selfishness, their petty dynastic pride, and their lack of leadership in the final stages. But the British were also not without responsibility. In the early stages they did not pursue the ideal of modernization with sufficient vigour. They were more concerned with avoiding another mutiny than with creating a

new order. Secondly, they refrained from uniting states into larger units which could have wielded effective influence and would have been large enough for modern methods of administration. This might have been done in the hey-day of their power and as late as Lord Curzon's time, but when they developed the will they no longer had the power. Lack of vision in the early stages on the British side, and of initiative and larger public spirit later on the princely side, led a great and promising experiment into final and irrevocable failure.

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CHAPTER 8

Lord Curzon

THE Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon marked the apogee of the imperial system which had been built up by Dalhousie and his post-Mutiny successors. It cannot be strictly said that the ideal of ultimate self-government propounded by Macaulay and envisaged by Bentinck was ever formally disavowed. At some periods, as in the time of Ripon, it was very much in mind. But the day of its realization was a movable feast, which during these years received its furthest extension in time. It was self-government yesterday and self-government tomorrow, but never self-government today. The tide of imperialism 'of which Kipling was the prophet and Chamberlain the practical manager', was at the flood. British self-confidence was at its height, and found it difficult to believe that other peoples could govern themselves effectively even if they were allowed to try. Tutorship had given way to trusteeship, implying action on behalf of others, but not necessarily the preparation of others to act for themselves. In addition to this exuberant self-confidence, there was disappointment at the rate of western reform amongst the Indian people. The early vision of self-government was linked with an expectancy of swift westernization. The free India which was to be would be a westernized India. Therefore the apparently slow progress of western reform caused the date of Indian self-government to recede in the minds of the administrators. To some it was a light, faint but twinkling, to others a mere will-o'-the-wisp. In this belief, as has been pointed out, the average administrator erred, because he was still looking for western reform in aristocratic places, and did not perceive the significance of the new rising middle class. Lord Curzon shared in this fallacy and provoked by his action a rude awakening.

At the time of his appointment Lord Curzon was the rising hope of the imperialist wing of the Conservative party. He was in his fortieth year; he had visited India four times besides other parts of the East, and he had been for three years the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He was eloquent, masterful, and energetic. There is a curious parallelism between him and Dalhousie. Both came to India in political youth with the promise of a brilliant future before them; both were imperious and incessant innovators; both preferred their own judgement to that of the men on the spot, both injected new vigour into the administration; both eventually rode too fast and too far and met with criticism and disappointment. Of the two, Dalhousie was the more creative. He embodied an age which was just beginning

and Curzon one which was ending. Dalhousie's measures were in many cases new departures, while Curzon's were often extensions or improvements of policies already in force. But it can be said with confidence that modern India would not have been the same without either of them, and of Lord Curzon that the measures which survived to become part of the Indian structure were of much more importance than those which were revoked. The overbearing manner, the brusque speech, the cutting comment have been forgotten with those who suffered them while India has retained the fruits of his incessant toil, his attention to detail, his clarity of mind, and his largeness of vision.

Lord Curzon's régime may be described as a benevolent despotism subject to a contingent reversion to self-government in an indefinite future. Curzon had the taste for power and a passion for improvement; he had a sincere desire to serve the country; he found legal powers and ceremonial position ready to his hand, and he plunged forthwith into the task of overhauling the whole Indian administration. We will follow him first to the frontier. On his arrival at the beginning of 1899 the frontier was still disturbed by the aftermath of the great flare-up of 1897 which was itself the product of resentment and suspicion of the semi-forward policy which had led to the drawing of the Durand Line in 1893. More than 10,000 troops were across the administrative border and there seemed little hope of withdrawing them. Nothing had been done to link them up by lateral communications, and there were proposals for further fortified posts, which would have meant an endless series of sieges and reliefs with permanent danger of a hitch arising from the loss of a post, which would set the whole frontier aflame. The state of the north-west frontier districts at the time of his arrival can be compared to an open sore to which caustic had been applied. The situation was inflamed and ugly, and seemed to be getting worse. Curzon's policy can be described as the removal of irritants, the use of the tribes to protect themselves, and the concentration of regular troops as a mobile reserve which could quickly concentrate overwhelming forces at any threatened point. In his own words the policy was 'withdrawal of British forces from advanced positions, employment of tribal forces in defence of tribal country, concentration of British forces in British territory as a safeguard and a support, improvement of communications in the rear'.

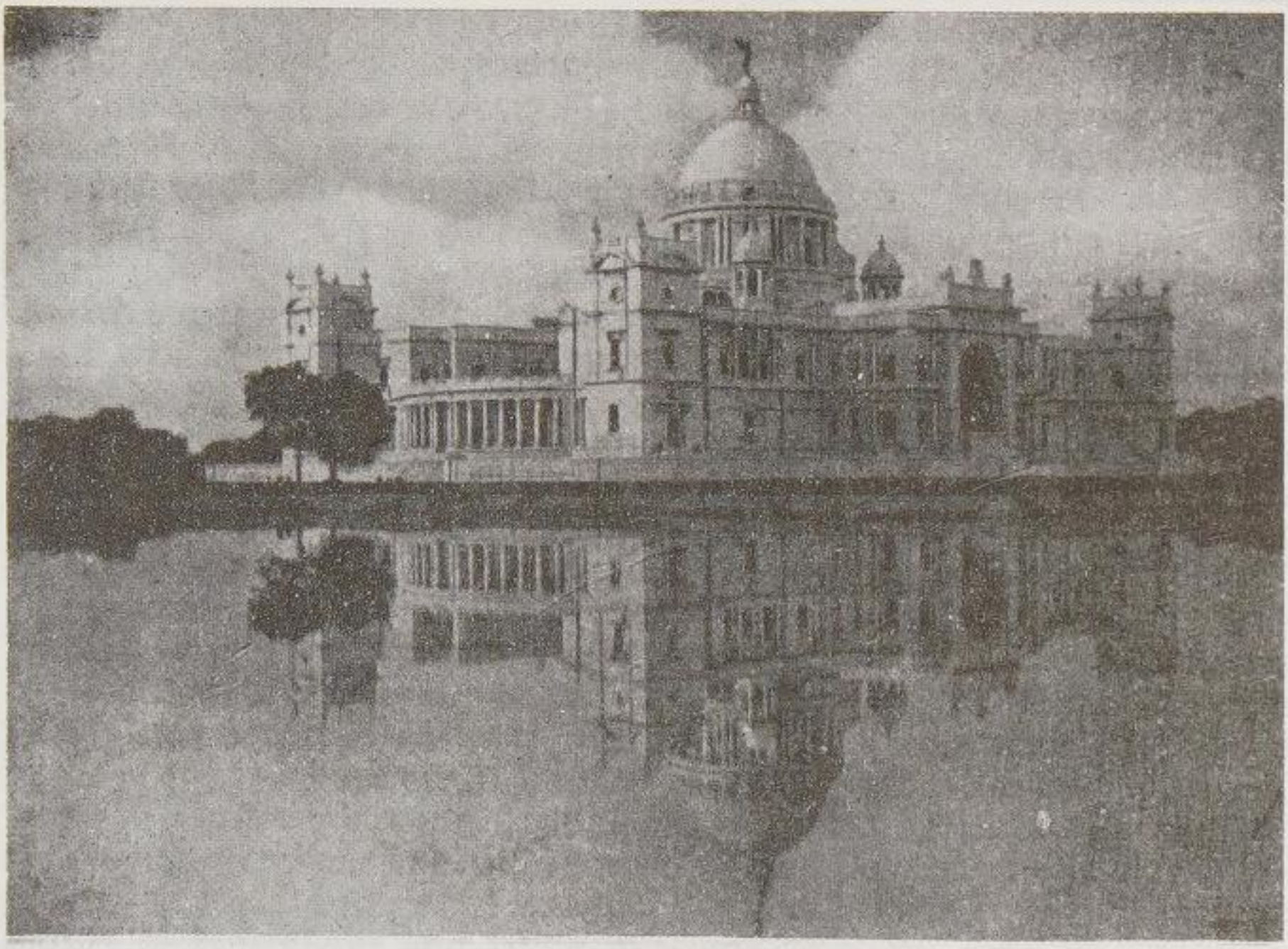
In pursuance of this policy British troops were withdrawn from Chitral, the Khyber, and the Khurram valley. Tribal levies or *khassadars* were raised to police the passes and tribal lands, with movable British columns in constant readiness at bases like Peshawar and Kohat. Roads and railways were built including the extension of the Quetta line to Nushki close to the Persian border. This provided an effective immediate solution, and kept the frontier quiet until the end of the first World War.

Linked with these measures was the creation of the North-West-Frontier Province. Some such measure had been discussed from the

time of Dalhousie. Lord Lytton had proposed to make all Sind except Karachi, together with parts of the Panjab, into a new province, giving Bombay the Central Provinces as compensation. The compelling reason for the step was the steadily increasing importance of the frontier districts. When the newly annexed Panjab was separated from a weak Afghanistan by a large block of disorganized tribal territory relations with the tribes could safely be left to the experienced officers on the spot. But as Afghan affairs became more important and involved international complications, the government of India was necessarily more directly concerned. Frontier affairs passed through the Panjab government before reaching Simla, and this made for delay where speed was vital. At the same time, as the Panjab became more settled, its government was increasingly concerned with the normal problems of internal development. As the supreme government became more frontier-minded the Panjab administration was becoming less so. With the arrival of a Curzon the result was inevitable; the long talked of separation became an accomplished fact. The heat which accompanied the change should not obscure the light which resulted. The new province contained the whole of the Pathan tribal territory, together with the five settled districts of Hazara, Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, and Dera Ismail Khan. It was presided over by a Chief Commissioner who was directly responsible to the Viceroy. It was staffed by members of the political department. It was Lord Curzon's child in much the same way as the Panjab had been Dalhousie's. The frontier went to the frontier-minded, and the wisdom of the move was justified by events. The creation of the new province had another result, for to avoid confusion the old North-West Provinces were renamed the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. Thus the familiar 'U.P.' came into being.

Beyond the frontier lay Afghanistan. British policy to the westward remained in essentials what it had been since 1880. A watchful eye was kept on both Russia and Afghanistan, but reliance was placed on the Afghan love of independence rather than on direct interference for the countering of Russian designs. So long as Abdur Rahman lived the policy worked successfully if not always quite smoothly. It survived the severe test of the 1897 risings because the Amir valued British support against Russia more highly than prestige in the fickle tribal world or the hazards of a *jehad*. His son, Habibullah, who had the unusual experience of an uncontested succession in 1901, was at first more difficult, and for some years refrained from drawing his subsidy. Amicable relations were restored by Sir Louis Dane's mission during Lord Ampthill's interregnum. The old agreement was renewed, the Amir received the personal title of 'His Majesty', and the subsidy was received.

But while Indian policy remained the same, its application farther west was affected by shifts in the European political scene. Since 1887 Russia had directed her attention to the Far East in a policy which led to the Russo-Japanese war in 1904. Her pressure in the Middle East



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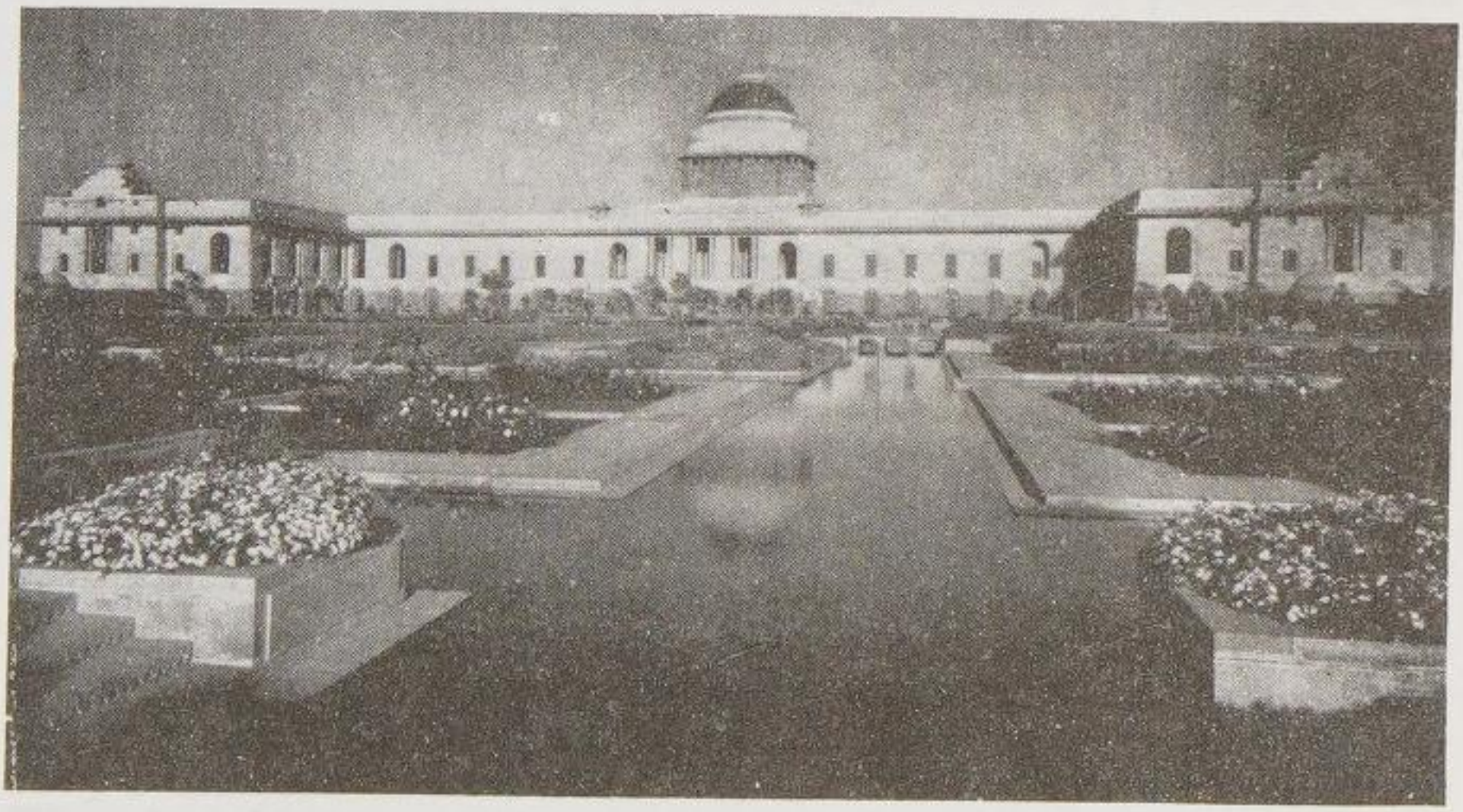

b. The Viceroy's House, New Delhi

was less, though her position, after the liquidation of the central Asian khanates, appeared to be more threatening. Her activity was confined to the permeation of northern Persia and the prevention of measures for modernizing that country. The British reply was to strengthen her influence in the south. This in its turn involved her position in the Persian Gulf where Britain had held important interests since the seventeenth century as successors to the Portuguese.[1] At the same time other powers were interested in this area. From 1890 the general British supervision of the Arabian coast from Aden and of the Persian Gulf was increasingly questioned. France obtained a coaling station from the Sultan of Oman in 1899, which was given up under threat of bombardment; a Russian attempt of the same sort was frustrated in the next year; while a German attempt to fix the terminus of the Berlin-Baghdad railway at Koweit was forestalled by an agreement with the Sheikh. It was a time when the diplomatic winds of Europe were shifting and no one was prepared to face British sea-power single-handed or able to coalesce with others against it. The matter was therefore settled to the outbreak of the first World War in 1914 by Lord Lansdowne's declaration in 1903 that the establishment of a fortified post or base in the gulf by another power would be regarded 'as a very grave menace to British interests which we should certainly resist with all means at our disposal'. There followed one of those progresses of pomp and power in which Curzon delighted with its prosaic sequel of consulates and trade missions. We can sum up Curzon's foreign policy to the west by saying that he restored Afghan confidence by a wise restraint based on the concentration of power, that he countered Russian permeation of northern Persia by strengthening British influence in the south, and that he warned off possible threats to the sea routes to India from the gulf by a clear if not always tactful display of sea-power. The policy was moderate and demonstrably successful.

Less happy were Curzon's dealings with Tibet. This secluded and wind-swept country had developed a unique form of Buddhist theocracy controlled by a monastic aristocracy. The Dalai Lama, the incarnation of the power of the Buddha, had displaced the ancient kings in the seat of power, and eclipsed the more holy Tashi Lama at Tashi Lhumpo. He was periodically discovered as an infant bearing certain holy marks, and during the suspiciously frequent minorities regency councils carried on the government. For 200 years Tibet had recognized Chinese suzerainty, exercised by two *ambans* or commissioners in Lhasa. The British had been in contact with Tibet from the time of Warren Hastings, who sent two envoys to the country. But it was Chinese policy to discourage intercourse with India; and it later came to be realized that the quickest way to Tibet lay through China. In 1885–6 the Chinese were induced to agree to a commercial mission to Tibet, but this was sacrificed to obtain Chinese consent to the annexa-

[1] In 1622 the Portuguese were driven from Ormuz by the Company.

tion of upper Burma. Desultory negotiations followed but no real trade resulted. At the turn of the century the situation was changed by three developments. With the palpable decline of the Manchu dynasty in China, Chinese influence in Tibet was sensibly weakening. The Tibetans began to look for someone who could complete the Chinese eclipse. The Dalai Lama, having outlived his minority and overthrown the Regency Council, proved to be a leader of vigour. Thirdly, the Dalai Lama, as anxious as his people to rid the country of Chinese influence, looked to Russia for help. In this he was much influenced by one Dorjieff, a Mongolian Buriat and a Russian subject by birth. There is reason to believe that Dorjieff's journeys to and from Russia were instigated by the Dalai Lama rather than the Russians, and that the new policy was opposed within Tibet itself. But it is easy to imagine the effect of the report that a Russian agent had entered Lhasa on a nature like Lord Curzon's, at once romantic and imperialistic. The lure of a closed land, the fear of the great Asiatic bogy-man, the desire for trade were powerful incentives to action. If Curzon thought at all of the Afghan parallel of 1878, he comforted himself with the thought that the Tibetans had little more than prayer wheels with which to resist modern weapons. The home government was reluctant to agree to interference; but having once allowed a British mission to advance fifteen miles beyond the frontier in July 1903, they found themselves unable to prevent the successive steps which led Sir Francis Younghusband to Lhasa itself in August 1904. The pitiful slaughter of 700 virtually unarmed Tibetans at Guru in March and the lack of any sign of Russian intervention caused a revulsion of feeling in favour of Tibet. The harsh terms imposed by Younghusband against instructions were reduced and the right to send an agent to Lhasa waived.[1] The only positive result was the stationing of a trade mission at Gyantse, which remained until 1947 without accomplishing very much. For the rest Russia was warned off from an area in which she was too preoccupied in the Far East to wish to interfere, the Tibetans were more convinced than before of the virtues of isolation, and some geographical knowledge was gained. Not least of the expedition's effects was the distrust it sowed in the minds of the home government of the soundness of Lord Curzon's judgement, which played its part in the handling of the Kitchener controversy a few months later. The expedition was conceived in arrogance and imperfect knowledge, carried through against the better judgement of the home authorities and concluded in defiance of instructions. The best that can be said for Curzon in the matter is that the home government must share the blame for not acting with greater decision in restraint. The Tibetan expedition was the swan song of British imperialism in central Asia.

We can now turn to Curzon's internal administration. Here the parallel of his activities to those of Dalhousie is close. There was no

[1] The indemnity of 75 *lakhs* was reduced to 25, the occupation of the Chumbi valley from 75 years to 3.

part of the administration, from the forbidding land revenue question to the expenditure in viceregal establishments, into which he did not probe. There was nothing that he probed that he did not seek to improve. The changes were many and often drastic, the jars to comfortable routine considerable, and shock to personal susceptibilities numerous. Lord Curzon was one of the least loved but most respected of Viceroys. Few men like the man who cracks the whip, however necessary it may be to run. Yet there were few changes which were not later recognized to be improvements. Criticism in the main must be confined to excess of activity which produced an irritation and feeling of unease whose symptoms revealed themselves after his departure. Even this fault, to anyone who knows the strength of inertia and the sway of custom in India, must be accounted an error in the right direction. In sum, it may be said that Curzon gave the administration an impetus which carried it on until the second World War. Many of Curzon's internal measures have already been included in surveys in other chapters; we shall therefore here be content with a summary account except for the two great questions of the partition of Bengal and the Kitchener controversy.

In his relations with the princes Curzon followed the general post-Mutiny policy but gave it a characteristic flavour of his own. The note of partnership was sounded in his insistence on courteous behaviour by officials and in the foundation of the Imperial Cadet Corps which gave elementary military training to scions of princely houses. It was not his fault that the scheme was so modest. He visited forty states in the course of six years. The note of princely duty and efficiency was heard in his public exhortations. 'I claim him as my colleague and partner', he said; 'he cannot remain *vis-à-vis* of the Empire a loyal subject of her Majesty the Queen-Empress, and *vis-à-vis* of his own people, a frivolous or irresponsible despot. He must justify and not abuse the authority committed to him; he must be the servant as well as the master of his people.'[1] His enthusiasm for the young and energetic Maharaja Sindia was unbounded. But a certain minatory note crept into his circular deprecating frequent princely absences from their states which hindered the real purpose of his policy by arousing understandable resentment. For Curzon the line between parental concern and pedagogic hectoring was blurred and indistinct. The same masterfulness emerged in more concrete questions. In 1903 the Berar question was settled, as Curzon thought amicably, by means of a personal discussion with the Nizam at which no one else was present. The government of India received the district as a perpetual lease and administered it as a division of the Central Provinces. But the Nizam did not share the Viceroy's view of the discussion and later complained that he had been intimidated. A revival of his claims called forth the Reading declaration of 1926 whose uncompromising claim to complete

[1] Earl of Ronaldshay, *Lord Curzon*, vol. ii, p. 89.

sovereignty throughout India provided a convenient basis for the later action of the independent Indian government.

Lord Curzon undertook a complete overhaul of the whole bureaucratic machine. He began with a war on office delays and verbose minutes and proceeded, department by department, by means of committees of inquiry which were used as preludes to reform instead of as excuses for inaction. The most important of these internal reforms was that of the police service as a result of a report in 1903. Curzon devoted much time and thought to land questions. The Land Resolution of January 1902 was his work and was prompted by a memorial of retired administrators who considered that assessments should be lightened and that the period of settlement should be lengthened. He rebutted the contention that famines were due more to over-assessment which left the peasant resourceless in the time of need rather than to failure of rainfall. For the rest the government showed that it was moving cautiously towards the rule that the demand should not exceed one-half of the net profit in the case of the cultivators, or one-half of the rental in the case of landlords, that settlements should be for not less than thirty years, and that local land taxation should not exceed 10 per cent. of the general tax. The resolution marked a further step in the steady march towards more elastic, scientific, and lenient assessments, towards the recognition that land revenue in a slowly expanding rural economy is not flexible, and that other sources of revenue must be tapped to meet new types of expenditure. The most famous of Curzon's land measures was the Panjab Land Alienation Act which aimed at preserving cultivators from eviction from their lands for debt. Rules were made for graduating large increases of assessment and for varying the demand according to the character of the season. A more positive measure was the establishment of co-operative credit societies whose aim was to liberate the peasant from the money-lender. Finally, provision was made for the development of scientific agriculture by the creation of an agricultural department with laboratories and experimental farms and a research institute at Pusa in Bihar. Lord Curzon was the first governor-general who saw in land not only a source of revenue but also a means of production, who was concerned with techniques of production as well as the methods of collection.

Lord Curzon was not content with bringing modern techniques to bear on ancient agricultural systems. He was alive to the possibilities of industrial development. His stimulus and planning were responsible for much of the rapid progress which was made in the years before 1914. By Curzon's time India had 27,000 miles of railway; Curzon added 6,000 miles more. The control of railways was transferred from the public works department to a new railway board which operated the state railways and planned development. For commercial and industrial questions a new department of commerce and industry was created, headed by a sixth member of the Viceroy's Council.

Apart from railways Curzon pushed forward irrigation works with equal vigour. In his first few months of office he had dealt with the famine of 1899 and had seen its ravages in his tour of the Panjab, Rajputana, and western India. He set up the Scott-Moncrieff Commission which planned further extensions on an all-India scale and sanctioned its proposal for the irrigation of $6\frac{1}{2}$ million more acres at a cost of £30 million.

Curzon's concern with material welfare was rounded off by cultural activity. In his concern for art and architecture he was unique among governor-generals apart from Warren Hastings. He patronized Warren Hastings's own creation, the Asiatic Society of Bengal. He conceived and carried out the project of a monument of British rule, which took the form of the stately Victoria Memorial in Calcutta. He founded the Imperial Library which was intended to be the Bodleian or British Museum Library of the East. His greatest work in this field was the creation of the department of archaeology for the conservation of the Indian artistic heritage and the carrying out of fresh excavation. The pioneer work of General Cunningham and others had not been followed up or systematized with the result that by Curzon's time 'beautiful remains were tumbling into irretrievable ruin simply for the want of a directing hand and a few thousand rupees'. Wherever he went he insisted on visiting the antiquities, whether they were the temples of Madura, the caves of Ajanta, or the Taj at Agra. He was ruthless in evicting officers and offices from ancient monuments, and no one but he at the time could have done it. He was fortunate in his director-general, Sir John Marshall, who persevered through years of neglect and discouragement until the value of the work was generally recognized.[1] This work was another step, even though an unconscious one, in the conversion of the government of India into an Indian government.

Curzon's educational measures have been kept to the end of his administrative record, because they form a bridge between his administrative and political work, his strongest and his weakest sides. Education was not more intimately connected with the life of the people than agriculture, but it affected the rapidly growing westernized middle class and touched their dearest aspirations. Western education had made them what they were and provided them with new ideals, new hopes, and new ambitions. When land questions were discussed the new class thought of the peasants in terms of 'them', when education was considered they thought and felt in terms of 'us'. There was a general feeling that the educational system built up since the eighteen-thirties had fallen short of expectation. The hoped-for filtration of western education downwards had not, it was thought, occurred. Higher education itself had become a sterile exercise in obtaining useful knowledge rather than a real culture of the mind. The uni-

[1] It was proposed to close the department in 1911 on the ground that its work was finished.

versities were examining bodies only with little control over their affiliated colleges and no power of stimulus, because they had no teachers or professors. One cannot create culture by registrars and result sheets. Curzon appointed a commission in which he characteristically omitted to include an Indian. In 1904 his Universities Act remodelled the universities and in particular the overgrown institution of Calcutta. It was sought to stimulate scholarship by establishing departments of post-graduate studies in Calcutta. At the same time a residential system was introduced. It was hoped to strengthen the educational character of the universities by increasing the nominated element in the governing bodies or senates and the executive bodies or syndicates. Measures were taken to control the recognition and conduct of affiliated colleges. Here lay the rub. The men displaced in favour of experts who were not always particularly expert were the new nationalists. They saw in this measure an attempt not so much to improve educational standards as to undermine their own influence in a world which they regarded as their own. The Viceroy, they thought, had shown the cloven hoof. They opposed the Act vigorously, proclaiming it reactionary and anti-national. Hitherto they had followed the Viceroy, in general, even with enthusiasm so far as he would allow it. But now the breach was definite. The opposition to the Universities Act proved to be the dress rehearsal for the greater crisis of the Bengal partition.

By 1904 Curzon had completed his first term of office. With general approval he was appointed for a second term and returned to India for this purpose in the autumn of 1904. But the sequel, as sequels so often are, was disappointing. His first term, in spite of the Tibetan indiscretion and certain official heartburnings, had been a resounding success. The honeymoon of government with Congress had not, it is true, survived the educational controversy of 1903–4, but he still had the respect, if no longer the full confidence, of the nationalist leaders. His energy and achievements seemed to justify his pomp, and the pageantry of the Delhi Durbar of 1903, when King Edward VII was proclaimed Emperor of India, seemed to put a ritual seal on his work. But from the moment of his return the intangibles in the situation seemed to turn against him, every step turned out to be a false one, and within a year he was back in his own country, frustrated, disillusioned, and embittered.

The problems which faced Curzon on his return were the Bengal administration and army reform. The Bengal Presidency had long presented a difficult problem to administrators. Its administrative history began with the grant by Shah Alam in 1765 of the *diwani* of the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. Each successive addition of the Company's territory in the north was added to it so that by 1810 it was already unwieldy, stretching up to Delhi and beyond to the Sikh frontier. The first attempt at reduction was made by the Charter Act of 1833 which provided for a fourth presidency with its capital at

Agra. Two years later this became the Lieutenant-Governorship of the North-West Provinces, which extended from the Bihar frontier to the Sutlej, and after the Mutiny as far as the Jumna. Bengal proper then became again the Mughul *subahs* of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. In 1854 this area was confided to a lieutenant-governor, in immediate subordination to the Governor-General. In 1874 his burden was lightened by the withdrawal of Assam under its own chief commissioner. Nevertheless, the growth of population and general development made his task immense. By 1900 it had become overwhelming. The population numbered 78 millions; the isolation and difficult communications of east Bengal resulted in neglect which sharply contrasted with the prosperity and progressive outlook of west Bengal. West Bengal being mainly Hindu and east Bengal Muslim the contrast was the more striking. Discussion had long proceeded and several schemes had been propounded; Lord Curzon's part was to choose one of them and carry it through. The method he adopted was to unite Assam and Chittagong with fifteen districts of Bengal to form the new province of eastern Bengal and Assam. Its capital was at Dacca, its population 31 millions and its people predominantly Muslim.

There was much which could be said for the arrangement. The backward areas had been separated from the rest and given special administrative attention. The Hindu west was neatly balanced by the Muslim east; the special needs of both communities could be separately considered. But Curzon had left out of consideration sentiment, which he despised, and national feeling, which he did not believe to exist. 'My own belief', he had written in 1900, 'is that the Congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my great ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise.' When, therefore, the Bengali public was aroused, when the separation was dubbed a partition, and the measure regarded as a deliberate attempt to strangle the renascent Bengali people, Curzon proved olympian in his detachment and adamantine in his disregard of public clamour. Reasoned protests grew into a heated popular agitation lead by Surendranath Bannerjea, monster meetings led on to a *swadeshi* movement and the boycott of foreign cloth, while in the background lurked the menace of terrorism. To all these signs and portents Curzon was unresponsive, insisting on carrying through the partition as a necessary administrative measure. The partition was later revoked, but the spiritual wound which the measure inflicted on the Bengalis, and indeed the westernized class generally, was never quite healed. From it issued widespread scepticism of the bona fides of the British professions about the development of self-government which in unbalanced minds bred the poison of terrorism.

Curzon's second problem was army reform. He was as anxious to overhaul the army as the civil administration, but here he had to work with the commander-in-chief. For the purpose he obtained the appointment of Lord Kitchener in 1902, then with his South African laurels fresh on his brow. At first they worked in harmony and much

was accomplished; but on his return to India Curzon found himself faced with a demand for the unification of the army administration under the commander-in-chief. Hitherto the head of the army in India had been the commander-in-chief, who was customarily appointed an extraordinary member of the Viceroy's Council. But the administrative army department was in charge of an ordinary member of council, who was a soldier of standing not allowed to hold a command during his term of office. This arrangement was convenient in view of the fact that the commander-in-chief was necessarily often absent from government headquarters, but it also meant that the Viceroy could obtain a second opinion about military matters in addition to that of the commander-in-chief. Kitchener resented this and desired the unification of the whole military administration under his control. This involved the disappearance of the military member, which Curzon, with the backing of his council, regarded as a threat to the supremacy of the civil power. The contest of these giants held India breathless during the early months of 1905. The matter went to the tottering Balfour cabinet, which, afraid to sacrifice either of its masterful servants, attempted a compromise which satisfied neither. Curzon considered that the substance of the matter had been conceded to Kitchener and resigned in August 1905. The sequel justified neither party. The position in which an officer sat in judgement on his superior was not defensible, and no effort was later made to revive it. On the other hand Kitchener's centralization was too drastic, and could only work in the hands of a man as energetic as himself. Its defects became manifest in the management of the Mesopotamian or Iraq campaign during the first World War, and new arrangements were made at its conclusion. Thus ended, in acrimony and disillusionment, the most masterful governor-generalship since Dalhousie's. Dalhousie's body was broken by his labours, and Curzon's spirit received a scar which never fully healed. Nevertheless, the bitterness of his spirit at the end of his rule must not cloud our judgement of the greatness of his achievement. As an administrator he did more than anyone could hope or expect. His efforts attuned the government of India to the new *tempo* of development in the twentieth century; without them India must have fallen behind in the race and the administration might have proved as unfitted to meet the exigencies of the new age as the Russian imperial régime. By his example and his eloquence he stimulated and inspired; he was the embodiment of paternalism in its devotion to duty, its care for the people and its self-sacrifice. His faults were superficially those of pride and self-confidence, but fundamentally that of lack of imagination. He could not see a new nation arising around him, the very product of British rule, yearning for political liberty as an ideal, and demanding autonomy as a right. He thought of the new class as agents of the government, the beneficiaries and coadjutors in a long vista of benevolent foreign rule. So he stumbled on just that ground where he thought he was most firmly based. He changed his attitude later, for he

drafted the Declaration of 1917. But his political obtusity created a breach between government and people which was never wholly closed in the remaining forty-two years of British rule.

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BOOK IV

National India, 1905–47

CHAPTER 1

The Political and Personal Thread, 1905–47

THE Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon was the last blaze of the old self-confident benevolent imperialism, conceived by Wellesley, nurtured by the Panjab school, and disciplined by Dalhousie. In many ways it pointed to the future, but in its essence it was of the past. From 1905 India entered into a new era. Politically it marked the transition from paternalism to independence and from centralism to a twin society; economically it covered the emergence of India as an industrial power fully participating in world markets, and spiritually in the rapid acclimatization of two ancient societies to the bleak and bracing air of the twentieth-century western society. Through these years grew to maturity a twin nationalism which seems likely to dominate events in the next historical period. The essential motive power behind these changes was the desire of India to make terms with the modern world in her own way and in her own right, and her increasing ability to do so. The course of events was modified by a number of factors. It is a feature of this period that these factors were no longer mainly British in origin; they were increasingly both Indian and cosmopolitan. They were both personal and impersonal, foreign and domestic. Here it is proposed to trace in outline the thread of these influences, leaving the final chapters for the treatment of more particular themes.

Before 1900 the only outer world which really impinged upon India as a whole was the British. From Britain came impulses of policy, innovations and ideas, persons and institutions, and from Britain came resistance to certain Indian desires. Britain's position in the world seemed to be unchallengeable and likely to remain so. The importance of the rest of the European world was probably under-estimated, but as a whole the West loomed over the eastern world as irresistible in its power and incalculable in its intentions. The only hope lay in some sort of accommodation with it. The first break in this vision of supremacy came with the triumph of Japan in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904–5. The effect was all the greater because Japan had admitted the West later than India and Russia was thought to be the greatest European

power after Britain. Japan was now the ally of Britain. If she could be a great power, why not India? The next step was the revolution in China which was thought, prematurely as it proved, to herald Chinese freedom from western interference. The case of China, along with the Young Turk revolutions of 1908–9 and the Persian liberal movement all suggested that the path of progress consisted in using western techniques and ideas to regenerate ancient societies and then to use western weapons against western supremacy. The belief in an irresistible West from which nothing but pure imitation could procure even a modicum of self-respect was broken. India and the East might look forward to independent life again, albeit at the price of radical internal adjustments.

These events proved the prelude to the much greater shock of the first World War. The West was now seen to be fiercely divided at its centre as well as vulnerable at its periphery. American democracy emerged as a force which might counter the old western imperialism. President Wilson's Fourteen Points and his doctrine of self-determination shot a thrill of expectancy through Asia, for whatever the difficulties of internal self-determination, it was certain that the Asian nations were determined in the desire to rule themselves. The American influence changed the emphasis of political discussion from constitutionalism and legal rights to the abstract rights of man. A more radical tone came into political discussion which, if it sometimes led to dangerous unreality, increased the self-confidence and determination of the new popular leaders. As Europe was seen to be no longer invincible, Britain was realized to be less powerful in the European system than had previously been thought. This new evaluation of Britain and the West encouraged the organizers of anti-government movements. What before 1914 would have seemed hopeless quixotry now became calculated policy. There was a limit to British power and there was no certainty of its continuance. This view was confirmed not only by the patent British exhaustion after the war, but by such developments as the League of Nations, where Britain appeared as an important but by no means dominant member, and India itself was represented. This changed mental estimate of Britain was confirmed by the events of the thirties, for the revival of German and Russian power relatively reduced that of Britain. At the same time distaste for the aggressive European dictatorships, too reminiscent of phases of the Indian past, increased sympathy with British ideals. The way was being prepared for the substitution of ideas for power as the basis of the Anglo-Indian connexion.

The second World War hastened the completion of this change of view. The spectacle of Britain fighting for her life and for European freedom warmed Indian hearts. But India saw no reason why she should not be free too. As the war closed it became clear that British power was now dwarfed by that of America and Russia, and that the future relationship of the two countries would depend as much upon India as Britain.

The second great factor in determining Anglo-Indian relations in these years was the British public. The general election of 1906 marked a great radical revival which swept into the limbo of the archaic notions of an endless wardship of a permanently adolescent India. The ideas of Gladstone and Ripon came now to be accepted by the larger part of both parties. If even Morley regarded full Indian self-government as a distant goal, as a hope rather than a policy, even men like Curzon and Lansdowne realized that progress must proceed along these lines. The Morley-Minto reforms were the first tentative steps in that direction. Opposition to them came more from members of the Indian services than the British political public; more political heat was engendered by the unseating of Calcutta as the capital than the enlargements of the councils or the admission of Indians to high places. The first World War increased this process of the change of opinion about India in Britain. The declaration of 1917 was the product of a coalition government drafted by Lord Curzon himself and prepared by a Conservative Secretary of State. It meant that Indian self-government had been brought forward, in British political thinking, from the horizon to the middle distance. It was still 'far off' but no longer in the dim distance. It could be aimed at and prepared for, not kept in reserve for the perorations of ceremonial speeches. The path to freedom was now to be planned, systematic, and regulated. The first fruits of this changed outlook were the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, with their planned reviews at the end of each decade.

Henceforth the controversy with Indian nationalists was essentially on the question of timing rather than on the goal of reform. Before the British governing class would willingly hand over power they wished to feel assured that there was someone to whom to hand it. The Congress claimed to be that someone, but during the twenties the British were not convinced. It was Lord Irwin (later Lord Halifax) who persuaded both British parties that advance must be rapid, that the Congress possessed a hard core of strength and must be dealt with as a negotiating party. The struggle of 1930–1 emphasized the correctness of this analysis. The declaration of 1929 that dominion status was the goal of Indian constitutional development was the outward sign of this change of mind. It brought Indian autonomy at a stroke from the middle distance to the forefront of the Indian political scene. The Act of 1935 expressed this new attitude in constitutional terms. Had no second World War intervened it is probable that full dominion status would have come within the following twenty years.

The third great force to be reckoned with was the growing power of Indian public opinion. Mid-Victorian Viceroys had mainly British and service opinion to consider. The only visible concessions to articulate public opinion before 1900 were the measures of Ripon and the Indian Councils Act of 1892. Under Curzon the Congress protested but was disregarded. But Gokhale was on terms with Morley and the confidant of Hardinge, and from the post-war years Indian reactions to British

measures became a major concern to government statesmen. The procession of Indian public men to the Viceroy's House 'for consultation' became a familiar spectacle, reaching its height in the time of Linlithgow. The opinion of the dynamic Indian minority was mainly expressed by Congress until the Muslim League under Jinnah, like a moon from the parent sun, broke away to form a second nucleus of opinion and power. The changes of opinion within the Congress itself were great, and can be related to the developments already touched upon. Curzonian disregard, Japanese success, and the advent of Liberalism to power in Britain stimulated the Congress to the first definite formulation of its political goal. This was defined in 1908 as a position identical with that enjoyed by Canada and the other self-governing colonies. This was really internal autonomy only, but served until the shock of the first World War for the majority of the political class. The war enlarged the general political horizon from autonomy to dominion status in its wider post-war sense. By the time the new dominion status was defined at the Imperial Conference of 1926 as virtual independence and legally embodied in the Statute of Westminster in 1931 the Congress had leaped forward (in 1929) to independence as its formal goal. But the new dominion status continued to satisfy the majority of nationalists. The real conflict of opinion within the nationalist ranks between the wars concerned methods. The issue lay between direct or constitutional, peaceful or violent action. These views were closely related but not identical, since one could be unconstitutional and also non-violent. This was in fact the course advocated by Mahatma Gandhi, and to which he periodically converted the main body of Congress. To his influence must be ascribed the minor part played by terrorism and violence in the Panjab and elsewhere, as also to his influence the growing discredit of constitutional methods of political agitation. After 1918 he converted a potentially violent revolt into a peaceful unconstitutional movement, which he called off when it threatened to degenerate into violence. Thereafter the pendulum swung from constitutional to direct action according to the Mahatma's calculations of political chances, but never got destructive or seriously out of hand. The greatness of this achievement should not be underestimated because of the completeness of its success. In fact he may be said to have kept Indian opinion on the constitutional path, for his campaigns against government were so closely related to moral principle that they may be considered *extra* rather than *anti*-constitutional. He brought in the moral law to supplement rather than supplant official law, and thus saved India during the British period from large-scale terrorism, massacre, and race-hatred.

There only remains to record, in this connexion, the growth of Muslim opinion until it became mentally a separate nation. It was the direct foil to the growth of Congress power in necessarily mainly Hindu hands. This subject is dealt with more fully in Chapter 5 below.

We can now return to the thread of British policy from 1905. The

new Liberal ministry had John Morley, the radical biographer of Gladstone, for its Indian Secretary of State. He united an aristocratic temper with radical principles, and this may have helped so to foreshorten his political vision that he saw no trace of self-government in Indian political prospects. The new Viceroy, the great-grandson of the first Lord Minto, was a public servant rather than a party man, just returned from a successful constitutional rule as Governor-General of Canada. He realized the necessity of reform and by tact rather than drive made it possible to inaugurate the Morley-Minto reforms with the consent of both British parties and the acquiescence of the Indian services. His successor was Lord Hardinge[1] who as permanent head of the Foreign Office wielded great influence and enjoyed the confidence of King Edward. Cold and correct in his manners, he appears dull and opinionated in his memoirs. But this unpromising exterior and these chilling relics concealed a strong will, a lively intelligence, and a keen insight into the needs of the time. He was chosen in preference to Lord Kitchener, who ardently desired the post, and his appointment thus saved what might have proved a disaster to Anglo-Indian relations. He managed the Delhi Durbar and King George V's visit to India in 1911, and carried through with unflinching firmness against much local opposition in Calcutta the transfer of the imperial capital to Delhi and the reconstitution of eastern India into the governorships of Bengal and Bihar and Orissa, with a revived Chief Commissionship of Assam. The Partition was thus undone and an historic site provided for the capital to the great satisfaction of national opinion. Calcutta (and Curzon) never forgave him for the loss of its status, but the act has been justified by the developments of half a century. It proved to be a vital administrative step in the preparation for Indian nationhood. Undeflected by attempted assassination in 1912[2] he cultivated close relations with Gokhale and other Congress leaders, and in 1913 he became a national hero by championing, in a speech at Madras, the cause of the South African Indians. The new Union ministry had severely limited Indian immigration and prohibited Indians in the Orange Free State 'from trading, farming or holding real property'. His action resulted in the setting up of a committee of inquiry in South Africa which lead to the Smuts-Gandhi agreement. The Act which embodied the agreement was described by Mahatma Gandhi (then the Indian leader in South Africa) as the Magna Carta of South African Indians. This proved to be optimistic but the agreement eased the situation for the next ten years. Lord Hardinge's régime marked something of a honeymoon between British and Indian Liberals, which might have lasted some years longer but for the outbreak of the first World War.

Lord Chelmsford's appointment in 1916 is still something of a mystery, for though nearly fifty he had only held two Australian

[1] He was the grandson of the Governor-General of 1844–8.
[2] On his state entry into Delhi as the capital.

governorships. His chief claim to distinction was his fellowship at All Souls, which may have appealed to the classically minded Asquith. But Greek verbs are not necessarily talismans to statesmanship; India suffered from inadequate though well-meaning leadership. It is difficult to resist the impression that the interests of the country were sacrificed to the war crisis at home, which made good men anxious to remain near the centre of danger, and to the lack of force of the premier, who failed to insist on a suitable appointment. In quiet times Chelmsford might have ruled with success, but quiet times, as Auckland found earlier, do not commonly wait for quiet men. Chelmsford took charge just as the early enthusiasm for the allied cause had subsided, to be replaced by rising discontents, and on the eve of the discredit which befell the government of India on account of the Mesopotamian campaign. The difficulties of the developing situation would have taxed the energies of a Dalhousie. Chelmsford never recovered the initiative from the events which crowded upon him; he always appeared to be driven by influences which were too strong for him. He was more nearly an agent, and less of a policy-maker than any Viceroy in the last period of British rule. After the military trouble came the Declaration of 1917, elaborated in London. The subsequent policy of reform became identified with the masterful Edwin Montagu. Chelmsford's part was by no means negligible, but it was subordinate rather than formative. He was unable to manage the increasingly restive public opinion and betrayed his lack of popular touch in the handling of the Rowlatt Bills. Nor was he more happy in dealing with the Panjab troubles in 1919. When he retired the new reforms had indeed been inaugurated by the Duke of Connaught, but the government was faced by a formidable non-co-operation movement led by Mahatma Gandhi, and an unprecedented alliance between Hindus in the Congress and Muslims in the *Khilafat* movement.

Lord Reading's appointment by Lloyd George[1] marked a return to the selection of men of cabinet rank for the Viceroyalty. A former Attorney-General, Chief Justice, and ambassador to the United States, he had a judicial temper well suited for dealing with the passions of the day and a diplomatic tact which imported a new touch in official dealings with political leaders. His mission was to make the constitution work, and this meant to create confidence and remove suspicion, to clarify, and to tranquillize. First he had to convince the country of the government's continued strength. He divined the essential weakness of the Hindu-Muslim coalition, arrested Gandhi when he was temporarily discredited by an outbreak of violence, and thereafter did all he could to make the reforms a reality. His political genius was to perceive that the differences that divided the opposition were at bottom more acute than those which separated the different sections from the new self-governing governmental policy, and to have the patience and nerve to allow the coalition to break up of itself. By 1926 non-co-opera-

[1] Lord Willingdon was very nearly selected.

tion had collapsed, the Muslims had broken with Congress and the Congress was torn with dissension. Lord Reading was often reproached for lack of positive action, but this view overlooks the fact that the situation as he found it demanded inaction rather than dramatic gestures. A busybody Viceroy at that juncture might have been disastrous. In quietness and confidence he found his strength. Lord Reading's weakness lay in his inability to give the country a positive lead, and so to capture its active sympathy for the policy of partnership, during the second half of his term when the country was disillusioned with its leaders and realized that the British would be with them for some time longer.

This effort was made by his earnest and influential successor. Lord Irwin gave up a cabinet post to shoulder the Viceroyalty, was the friend of the prime minister Baldwin, and the grandson of Sir Charles Wood, the coadjutor of Dalhousie. Never before had such moral earnestness been combined with such high-mindedness and ability. If some of the results of his actions were unlooked for their fruits were nevertheless notable, for it was he who was mainly responsible for convincing the British public that the partnership policy must be pursued to its logical conclusion on the one hand, and the Indian public that the British meant what they said on the other. Though lacking in the arts of popular appeal he came to be more respected and even loved than any Viceroy since Ripon. And this he achieved though the storm and stress of a civil disobedience movement. Probably no other Englishman could have emerged from such an ordeal with enhanced respect in India, or used the occasion for reaching and understanding with the national leader himself. His weapons were integrity, patience, and charity of mind, displayed in a personality of great ability. In the stressful year 1930–1 these qualities enabled him to pursue a steady course, withstanding the pressures of opinion at home, in India, and from within his own government. His reward was the creation of a new, if sometimes only half-convinced respect for British intentions and a new willingness to work towards the common goal. In the long run the declaration of dominion status as the goal of constitutional development proved more significant than the civil disobedience movement, and the round table conferences than the revival of this movement in 1932. Irwin's relationship to Gandhi somewhat resembled, in the altered circumstances, that of Hardinge and Gokhale before.

Lord Willingdon's earlier success in Bombay and Madras augured well; he was known to be liberal-minded; he was charming, competent, and experienced; his wife was the outstanding viceregal lady of the series. But he was sixty-five years of age and, in fact, lacked the energy to give the country the lead it needed. He presided urbanely over a government which in effect marked time while constitutional discussions proceeded in London. Political India, resentful of the repression which marked the beginning of his term but weary of 'direct action' in the altered circumstances, adopted an attitude of watchful waiting.

Mahatma Gandhi

Willingdon's break with Gandhi on the latter's return from the second round table conference at the beginning of 1932 was perhaps unavoidable though unfortunate, but his failure to heal the breach later was a political blunder. He committed no major indiscretion as Chelmsford had done before, but, as in the case of Lord Reading, he failed to cover the newly strengthened hand of the government with the glove of the appealing gesture. Partnership remained as a policy as it had been in Reading's time, but no longer as an ideal. Thus the last real opportunity of uniting Indian hearts and heads was lost.

By the time that the Government of India Act became law in 1935 Willingdon's term was drawing to a close. It fell to Lord Linlithgow to supervise the new elections and launch the new constitution. He was chosen by the national government for this purpose and had prepared himself by long study of Indian affairs and the chairmanship of an agricultural commission. He was of cabinet standing though he had not actually held cabinet office. He was industrious, clear headed, patient, and capable; no other Viceroy worked harder or more conscientiously during his long term of office. His fault was over-application to detail which at times caused him to miss the wood for the trees; his patience sometimes ran to procrastination, as in the Bengal crisis of 1943, and he lacked the intuitive sense of 'a tide in the affairs of men'. But for this, federation might have been a fact before the second World War broke upon the world in 1939. From then on he was immersed in war problems. He showed the ability to control and direct without the power of inspiring. His rock-like firmness under the threat of Japanese attack in 1942 and the subsequent Congress insurgence was of incalculable value. His personal contacts and conferences were unremitting, but he lacked that imaginative spark or personal warmth which might have prevented nationalist impatience from turning to hostility. It is too early yet to assess his place in the viceregal roll because we are imperfectly acquainted both with his difficulties and his personal share in events.

The same verdict must be applied to his two successors. Lord Wavell's mandate in 1943 was to hold the country and to organize victory. In this he was very successful, and soldier as he was, came nearer to the hearts of the people than anyone since Lord Irwin by his handling of the Bengal famine on his arrival. From the time of the fall of Japan in August 1945 his mission was to prepare for a handover of power and to secure an agreed transfer to the two great parties. The time has not yet come to pass judgement on his efforts or on the wisdom of the government which recalled him. It must suffice to say that this least militant of soldiers and least obtrusive of rulers concealed a subtle and powerful mind beneath a gnarled and taciturn exterior. In effect the last, he was by no means the least in the line of British Indian Governor-Generals. Lord Mountbatten came with an order to organize retreat, in military parlance an 'operation'. That work was carried out brilliantly whatever may be thought of the

immediate consequences of partition in the Panjab. Here, too, historical judgement must hold its hand until time has added perspective to the scene and a key to the archives.

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CHAPTER 2

Edwardian India

THE years 1905 to 1914 form a clearly defined period in modern Indian history, which may be described as Edwardian India. The emphasis on efficiency and paternalism to be operated by a vigorous head and an enlightened bureaucracy was changed to a regard for self-government and self-expression. 'Freedom rather than discipline, autonomy rather than efficiency' were the new watchwords. There was a new approach to the now obviously rising Indian national party, a certain recognition that they, rather than the aristocrats or princes, were the dynamic minority in the country with whom the future lay. There was a response from the side of popular leadership and there developed a *rapprochement* between government and popular leaders which was not seen again until the brief two years before the second World War, and then not so completely. At the same time the impetus which Lord Curzon had imparted to all branches of the national life continued; material progress continued apace, and India was on the way to becoming an industrial state. Economically as well as politically she was developing the flesh of autonomy beneath the outer skin of the British *raj*.

The first problem which faced the administration was a personal one. Lord Minto, sent by the Conservatives to carry on Curzonism without Curzon and to work Kitchenerism with Kitchener found himself faced with a Liberal landslide in Britain and a radical Secretary of State in John Morley. Morley had supported Curzon on the Kitchener question and had denounced the Partition of Bengal. But politicians are rarely embarrassed for long by charges of inconsistency. Morley disappointed radical hopes by deciding to accept the *fait accompli* in both cases. The commander-in-chief became head of the army department and an ordinary member of council, and a military supply department was created. But in 1907 even this last relic of Curzonism was removed. In Bengal he accepted the fact of partition while emphasizing a prospective change of methods. This was revealed in the restraint put upon the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Bampfylde Fuller, when he wished to disaffiliate two schools for allowing their boys to take part in political meetings. Fuller's offer of resignation was accepted, to his surprise and indignation.

The second legacy with which the new government had to deal was the appearance of a terrorist movement, hitherto almost unknown in British India. There had been signs of this in western India during the plague crisis, but both the grievances and the ideals which stirred the

terrorists were local. Now it appeared in western India, Bengal, and the Panjab. In western India it was connected with B. G. Tilak's cult of patriotic orthodoxy; in Bengal it was a highly emotional cult linked with the goddess Kali and clearly the outcome of partition strains and stresses; in the Panjab activity seems to have been linked with agrarian grievances stimulated by men from down country. In Bengal the movement would seem to have been most directly linked with emotional stress arising from political causes; in Bombay the movement really marked the return to activity of an extremist group long underground; while in the Panjab, where the rule of law and regular administration had hardly yet endured for sixty years, the appeal to violence never lay far below the surface. The whole episode had for its background a price rise unprecedented in the previous fifty years. Political measures dealt with the major political discontents; it was the economic discontent which accounted for the spasmodic continuance of the movement throughout this period. A number of murders occurred, culminating in that of Sir Curzon Wyllie in London in 1909 by a Panjabi. The Secretary of State reluctantly sanctioned two Acts making incitement to murder felonious and the making of explosives illegal. Tilak was imprisoned for six years for incitement to murder when commenting on the Muzaffarpur outrage. With the advent of reforms the movement gradually died away, its last important shot being the attempted assassination of Lord Hardinge on his state entry into Delhi in 1912. The movement naturally caused alarm, but it was in fact the work of very small bodies unsupported by the main mass of political India. It was a symptom of the increasing self-consciousness of political India, and of the danger of neglecting to provide a safety valve of public institutions for the new desire for public self-expression.

A third inheritance of the new régime was the Tibetan question. The home government had already reduced the Tibetan indemnity from 75 to 25 *lakhs* payable in annual instalments of a *lakh* and had allowed the evacuation of the Chumbi valley after three instalments had been paid. The Indian government still saw Russians wherever snow lay, but Morley was determined to end the entanglement. In 1906 the Pekin convention secured Chinese agreement to the treaty of Lhasa; it secured a guarantee against any interference in Tibetan affairs provided China applied the same exclusion to the other powers. Finally, the Chinese were allowed to pay the indemnity on behalf of the Tibetans. When this was done in 1908 the home government ordered the evacuation of the Chumbi valley against the wishes of Calcutta. This could now be safely done because the whole situation in Asia had been transformed by the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907. The period of diplomatic flux mentioned in Book III, Chapter 8, was now ending. The Anglo-Russian *entente*, following the Anglo-French *entente* of 1904, completed the arrangement of the European powers into two armed camps. To present a united front with France against Germany and Austria with their now hesitant partner Italy,

Britain and Russia found it expedient to settle their Asiatic differences. Both powers agreed to respect Tibetan territory, to treat it as a dependent of China, and to send no agents to Lhasa. In Afghanistan the existing position was confirmed. In Persia both countries agreed to respect Persian independence and also recognized Russian and British spheres of influence in north and south Persia. This was little more than a recognition of existing facts and gave little comfort to Persian patriots, but it did prevent a possible clash between the two powers and gave the nascent Persian national movement a chance to develop. This is the best that can be said for it. Sir Edward Grey, the Liberal Foreign Secretary, was never happy about it; the situation was summed up by the cartoonist who pictured the Persian cat between the British lion and the Russian bear while the bear said to the lion: '*You* stroke the tail while *I* stroke the head and we can *both* stroke the back.'

The Tibetan settlement had unlooked-for results. To the Dalai Lama India now appeared as a friend and the Chinese, whose interference was increasing, as the enemy. His differences with them led to his flight to Darjeeling in 1910 whence he returned to Lhasa after the Chinese revolution of 1911 and the troubles which followed it had led to a decline of Chinese power.

We can now pass to the political measures which gave to Edwardian India its special stamp. Both Minto and Morley were convinced that something must be done to associate articulate Indian opinion more closely with the government. But neither were yet prepared to admit that that something must be in the direction of elected representative bodies and eventual self-government. In the case of Minto this was natural; he was a man of affairs rather than a politician who accepted without question the oriental basis of Indian society. To him what was needed was an extension of the machinery for providing local advice to the ruling authority. The British Indian durbar must have Indian councillors as well as European. Morley's case was much more perplexing. The development of self-governing institutions on western lines had been liberal doctrine since the days of Ripon and Gladstone, and Morley prided himself on being an advanced radical in his opinions. But he also possessed an authoritarian temper which made him delight in his position as Secretary of State, and loath to part with any of its attributes of power in India. Yet his whole mode of thought was democratic and representative, which led him to cast the changes he proposed in a western mould. To the last he endeavoured to convince himself that the new measures would not lead to self-government, though he defended the extension of western institutions on the plea that the issue had been prejudged by the introduction of western education in 1835. In this he was right, but it remains a mystery why he could not carry the inherent logic of the situation a little further. But Morley, for all his bold words, was a somewhat timid man who shrank from the immense implications of his own actions. He is not the first man of words who has hesitated when it came to acting upon

them and before we condemn his hesitation we must remember the very different mental climate which prevailed before 1914. The sun of imperialism was still scarcely clouded and its total eclipse seemed then to be remote.

The two men, so different in their origins and natures, proved useful foils to each other. Minto's patience enabled him to sustain urbanely his Secretary's verbal shafts; Morley's keen intellect and influence clarified issues and achieved results which Minto could not have attained without him. The efforts of both were needed to breach the defences of conservatism and vested interests in the India Council and the services in India. Credit belonged to both for the results which were achieved.

The problems to be solved may be divided into the securing of better representation of important Indian interests, the enlargement of the powers of the existing legislative councils, and the introduction of an Indian element into the executive. Minto's first proposal under the first heading was the creation of advisory councils in addition to the existing legislative councils which would be representative of all classes including the princes, but possess no legislative or other power. This was an attempt to embody the durbar idea and to further the familiar policy of associating the princes with the imperial government which led to Lytton's abortive ideas of an Indian peerage. The stone intended to wing two birds hit neither, for the princes refused to join such councils whose obvious impotence excited criticism. Recourse was then had to the enlargement of the existing councils, thus continuing the line of development on the western model which had proceeded since 1854. Election was the method of selection for the majority of non-official members. The election was in most cases indirect, being by provincial legislatures in the case of the centre, and by a great variety of public bodies representing various facets of the national life, in the case of the provinces. Municipalities and district boards, chambers of commerce and universities, landholders and special interests such as tea and jute all played their part. In addition to an increase of membership, the proportion of non-officials was increased. The Imperial Legislative Council consisted of 60 members with the Viceroy presiding as compared with 25 under the Act of 1892. There were 28 nominated officials including 1 from each of the 9 local governments, and 32 non-officials, of whom 27 were elected. The official majority, though small, was thus preserved, a fact which assumed great importance a few years later. In the provinces, however, non-official majorities were introduced.

The powers as well as the numbers of the councils were also enlarged. The councils under the 1861 Act could only consider Bills which were laid before them. The Act of 1892 allowed the asking of questions and a discussion on the annual budget. This permitted a general discussion on policy and gave Gokhale the opportunity for his famous annual budget surveys. The Act of 1909 permitted, in addition, the asking of supplementary questions and the tabling of resolutions.

The council still possessed far from full parliamentary powers, for no unofficial Bills could be introduced and no votes of censure tabled. But it was now well on the way to attaining that stature. The new powers accorded to it crossed the boundary from what was really an advisory body of counsellors only slightly connected with the general public to what was in fact a deliberative public body. A dignified semi-private council had become a miniature popular assembly. The government could neither be defeated or censured it is true, but information could be extracted on awkward subjects by means of questions and views on subjects of moment to the non-official world could be ventilated by means of resolutions. Full advantage of these facilities was taken by Gokhale, one of whose actions under the new régime was to table a motion in favour of universal education.

In the executive sphere no changes were made. The government could enforce its will at the centre through its official majority, and in the provinces through the powers of the governors. But the number of executive councillors in Bombay and Madras was increased from three to four, the way being left open for the appointment of a non-official, an executive council was created in Bengal, and provision made for the creation of executive councils elsewhere on certain conditions.

The appointment of Indians to high office was an object cherished by both Minto and Morley. It did not require specific legislative enactment in a racial sense, as a result of the Charter Act of 1833, but there were other obstacles. The presidency councillorships were limited to men with years of official service behind them, which virtually excluded Indians owing to the small number of Indian members of the civil service. This difficulty was surmounted by the provisions noted above. For the appointment of Indians to the Viceroy's Council and the Council of India in London there was no legal bar. But the members of both bodies resisted the idea, and when the question of an Indian appointment to the Viceregal Council was put to the cabinet, it was rejected. Minto's proposal to his executive council, wrote Professor Dodwell, 'startled some of them, like a pistol pointed suddenly at their heads'. Morley had therefore to be content with nominating two Indians to the India Council in 1907.[1] After the passage of the Councils Act Sir Satyendra (later Lord) Sinha was appointed to the Executive Council.

For all its caution and regard for precedent there are certain special features to be noted in the Act. The first was the introduction of the principle of direct election and of communal representation by a side wind, as it were. As soon as it was known in 1906 that constitutional changes were in contemplation a Muslim deputation asked Lord Minto for representation of Muslim interests through special constituencies. Their reason was that they were, as a group, under-represented on the bodies which were likely to be the electoral units, and that in any general electoral roll based on a property qualification, they would

[1] Messrs. Krishna Govind Gupta and Sayyid Husain Bilgrami.

be under-represented on account of their poverty. The government's attitude to the Muslim community was now very different to what it had been after the Mutiny. As a result six special Muslim constituencies of landholders were created for the Imperial Legislative Council, and others in some of the provinces. This measure, which seemed but an expedient to secure representation for an important body of opinion, was one of the deepest import. It may perhaps be described as the official germ of Pakistan. A second feature was the emphasis on the experimental nature of the changes. Nothing was to be final; all was to be subject to review and modification. If this left the door open to a return to the durbar system of respectful advice by nominees it also left it open for advance towards responsibility and self-government. The emphasis on empiricism answered beforehand the arguments of those who said that India could never proceed on western lines, and made it possible for those who had scouted such developments to agree to them later without loss of consistency. A third but less significant feature was the syndicalist nature of the electoral bodies in the provinces. Had the system been extended India might have developed a unique type of guild constitution. But the urge to orthodox representation proved too strong and that development never occurred.

The Indian Councils Act, the core of what is generally known as the Morley-Minto reforms, became law in 1909. In many ways it only marked an extension of existing tendencies and in the after-years, when the impact of the first World War had radically changed the outlook of both India and Britain, it became customary to regard it as a rather small matter which created a disproportionate stir. But the significance of events must be estimated in relation to the circumstances of the time in which they occurred. A furlong's advance before 1914 required an effort which would have secured a mile afterwards. Viewed from this standpoint it must be adjudged a major landmark in the progress of India towards self-government. It did not, it is true, go beyond the consultative principle or impinge upon the powers of the irresponsible executive. But it reached the limit of that principle so clearly, that no further progress was possible without entering into new constitutional fields. And that progress was virtually inevitable since the whole Act exemplified the principle of development. It prided itself on its development from the past and it clearly implied a development in the future. Had there been no war, further progress would no doubt have been slower in coming, and the next step perhaps less radical, but progress there must have been. The Councils Act in this respect may be compared to the Anglo-French *entente* of 1904; as the latter implied an alliance without a commitment to one, so the former implied an evolution towards responsible government without any avowal of the process. In both cases statesmen denied vigorously what they knew to be implied and in both cases the logic of fact proved stronger than the dialectic of debate.

The working of the reforms fell to Lord Hardinge who succeeded

Minto in October 1910. They were on the whole received well by political India. The Congress leaders, who had shed their extremist wing in 1907,[1] looked with suspicion upon communal representation and were disappointed that no large popular constituencies had been created. They could not accept Morley's disclaimer of fostering parliamentarism, but they had obtained more than they had expected and were privately gratified and hopeful. Hardinge worked on these feelings, not only through his public measures, but by maintaining private contacts with prominent men, and particularly Gokhale. A sort of unavowed *entente* grew up; the government and nationalist opposition were more nearly in accord than at any time between 1888 and 1937.

Hardinge's first task was to organize the customary Delhi Durbar for the new King George V in 1911, which this time was graced by the king-emperor and his consort themselves. As a spectacle the durbar was magnificent and as a gesture it was successful. It marked perhaps the peak of British authority in India. But apart from pomp and prestige the occasion was marked by three significant Acts. The first raised Bengal to the status of a governor's province. The second undid the partition of Bengal, and the third transferred the capital of India to Delhi. The promotion of Bengal to gubernatorial rank was long overdue on account of both the size and importance of the province. Hitherto the presence of the supreme government in Calcutta had hindered such a rational step, but the removal of the capital now made it politically possible as well as administratively desirable. It pleased the patriotism of the Bengali people and provided a solace for those who mourned the departed mighty. The partition was officially 're-arranged'. The two Bengals were united to form the new governor's province, Assam was again reduced to the status of a chief-commissionership, and a new province of Bihar and Orissa (including Chota Nagpur) was created. This settlement stood the test of time. It gratified Bengali sentiment; it proved administratively viable; it provided a focus for the backward but potentially important region of Bihar. The main criticism of the measure was that it represented a concession to agitation; but if that line were consistently taken, what concessions by authoritarian governments would ever be made? It was more plausibly said that bombs bred boons, but again, if bombs were allowed to block boons, what would there be save more bombs? The important fact was that the government of India was playing from strength and its action as a whole was received in that spirit. The third measure was one of the few secrets successfully kept in modern India. Calcutta and Lord Curzon at home were thunderstruck; neither forgot or forgave. But India as a whole was delighted. The action was certainly designed to appeal to Indian sentiment, but it had other solid arguments to support it. From the time of Lord William Bentinck (who had Meerut in mind) suggestions were periodically made for moving the capital up-country. Lord Curzon himself thought of Ranchi. The remoteness

[1] For the development of the Congress party from 1900 see the next chapter.

of Calcutta from the main scenes of Indian action was the reason for the much criticized annual sojourn in Simla. In fact the government spent much longer there each year than in Calcutta. The argument for finding a more central situation was strong. The difficulty was to find a place whose historical associations might unite with practical convenience in justifying the large outlay which would be necessary. Delhi, covered by the Panjab and Frontier Province, possessing Mughul associations without important Mughul survivals, forming a vital centre of communications and being near to the Simla hills, now provided such a centre. The decision was justified in the circumstances of the day, and it proved even more important than its authors imagined. It provided the monument in stone which the British had hitherto lacked, and the new India with a ready made capital.

Lord Hardinge's years before the outbreak of the first World War were occupied in pursuing the lines of policy thus laid down. The new capital was occupied in 1912 and energetically developed by Sir Malcolm (later Lord) Hailey. The liaison with Congress was maintained by the appointment of G. K. Gokhale in 1912 to the Islington Commission on the Public Services. Owing to the war the commission did not report until 1917 but it served to advertise the paucity of Indians in the higher services, to make more difficult the opposition of vested interests, and to make changes inevitable. Gokhale was also sent to South Africa to state the Indian case during the dispute between the South African Indians led by the young Gandhi and the new Union government. In November 1913 the Viceroy electrified India by expressing 'the sympathy of India, deep and burning, and not only of Indians, but of all lovers of India like myself, for their compatriots in South Africa in their resistance to invidious and unjust laws'. This caused some dismay in Britain but was too popular to be disavowed. It led to palliative action in South Africa which solved, or at least postponed, the problem of the position of Indians in the union for another ten years.

Thus India was proceeding in growing trust between government and popular leaders, in increasing prosperity, and gathering self-confidence when 'the lights went out' in Europe as the first World War began.

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RECENT PUBLICATION

A full study of the revolutionary *Har Dayal* is by Emily C. Brown (Arizona, 1975).

CHAPTER 3

The First World War and the Montford Reforms, 1914–21

(i) *The World War and after, 1914–21*

THE first World War forms the portal through which India entered the stage of the modern world from the hall of Victorian India, Edwardian India forming, as it were, the vestibule between them. India had enjoyed nearly fifty-six years of total peace. She had come to regard Europe as a region adjacent to Britain which itself was a place one went to and came from and was the mainspring of all significant happenings. In spite of the stirrings of the previous few years, India was still as a whole colonially-minded as she was still colonial in political status. The first reaction to the war was as to something exciting but remote, and it took some time for the realization to spread that the familiar Indian landscape was involved in the earthquake that had overtaken Europe.

The outbreak of the war in August 1914 called forth an outburst of loyal sentiment among both the political classes and the princes. All believed that the war would be short and that Britain would emerge on the winning side. For the princes it was an opportunity for action while popular leaders more soberly calculated that present service would mean future rewards. Lord Hardinge reaped the fruits of the existing goodwill to his government as well as the accumulated prestige of the British. There was a general cessation of embarrassing activity and a general support of war measures. In this atmosphere of goodwill, 1,200,000 men, 800,000 of whom were combatants, were recruited, £100 million were given outright to Britain for the prosecution of the war and £20–30 million contributed annually. India was denuded of both troops and officials so that at one time only 15,000 British troops remained in the country. The national pride was stirred by the dispatch of an Indian army corps to France in the autumn of 1914, and later of troops to East Africa, Egypt (for the defence of the Suez Canal), and to the Persian Gulf.

If the war had ended in six months as first expected the government might have emerged stronger than before. But as it lengthened year by year, growing ever more severe and more doubtful, feelings underwent a change. The collapse of Russia in 1915 ended all hope of a speedy finish. Enthusiasm turned to impatience and economic difficulties bred discontent and bitterness. The campaign against Turkey imposed a severe strain on the Muslim community, still in the main orthodox in its outlook and accepting the Turkish Sultan as the *Khalifa*. The fall of Kut-el-Amara in Iraq in April 1916 and the revelations of mismanagement which followed shook the credit of a government thought

to be efficient as well as powerful. By the end of the second year of the war the mood of India had altered from enthusiasm to one of critical impatience, restlessness, and expectation of change. It was seen that the old world was in ruins, that Britain was neither all-powerful nor all-wise; expectations were raised, and tempers shortened. Economic difficulties leading to a rise in food prices, the over-zeal of recruiting agents in the Panjab and western India, and the great influenza epidemic of 1918 which swept away 5 million people accentuated these tendencies. By the end of the war India was as war-weary, restless, and irritable as Britain itself.

An early sign of discontent was the revival of revolutionary activity in Bengal and the *Ghadr* conspiracy in the Panjab in 1915. Its leader, Har Dayal, went to Berlin and endeavoured to foment a Muslim rising from Kabul, but his efforts never rallied large-scale support, and were troublesome rather than dangerous. On the constitutional side the developments were rapid and portentous. As the war proceeded all parties, both in Britain and in India, realized that things could never be the same again. In 1914 the prime minister Asquith said that 'henceforth Indian questions would have to be approached from a different angle of vision'. All the parties concerned realized that the tempo of events had quickened; the difficulty lay in the fact that each of them had their own notions of the new speed. From this time onwards all were playing, so to speak, from the same 'score', but none were agreed on the timing. Lack of unison led to discordance and discordance to recriminations. In the process each unconsciously learnt from the other, British from Indian and Indian from British, Muslim from Hindu and Hindu from Muslim. Acknowledgements were few, but looking back on events we can remark rather on the speed with which all parties adapted themselves to the new situation than on their obstinacy in clinging to the past.

The instinct of the British was to postpone all positive action until the end of the war. Its protracted and doubtful nature and the magnitude of the Indian effort both in Europe and the Middle East, made this impossible. The first, almost unnoticed steps, were the ending of the system of indentured emigration for Indian labourers overseas and the raising of cotton import duties without a countervailing increase in the cotton excise. On 20 August 1917 the coalition government took a step which proved a starting-point for the developments of the next thirty years. In form it was a declaration made in the House of Commons by the new Secretary of State, Edwin Montagu. The keynote was the definition of the object of British policy in these words.

> The policy of H.M. government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the Empire.

The united character of the declaration was shown by the fact that a

Conservative, Austen Chamberlain, had produced the first draft, while Lord Curzon had given it its final form. To the policy of Indian association with government administration and of responsible government were added the conditions of progress by stages and of judgement by the home and Indian government of the time and nature of each advance in accordance with the extent of the co-operation received and responsibility shown. In spite of the grandmotherly conditions attached, the declaration was an epoch-making document which officially committed Britain to the development of Indian self-government along parliamentary lines and permitted no logical distinction between that goal and dominion status. The next step was to decide on the first stage of the journey. The Secretary of State himself toured India during the cold weather of 1917–18 and produced with the Viceroy the Montagu-Chelmsford report in July 1918 at the height of the final crisis of the war. The report was unusually philosophic in style as well as unconventional in tone; it was perhaps more important for its general propositions than for its detailed proposals which seemed almost timid by comparison. The most controversial of these had a prophetic ring: 'We believe that nationhood within the Empire represents something better than anything India has hitherto attained; that the placid, pathetic contentment of the masses is not the soil on which Indian nationhood will grow, and that in deliberately disturbing it, we are working for her highest good.'[1] Thereafter a Franchise and Functions Committee toured India in 1918–19. Parliamentary consideration occupied most of the year 1919 and the reforms became law in December. The year 1920 was occupied in the necessary administrative preparations and the first elections, so that the new constitution was not inaugurated by the Duke of Connaught until March 1921. A sketch of the new system is given at the end of the chapter; here it is sufficient to say that the Act greatly enlarged the legislatures, providing general constituencies and an individual franchise; that it gave the provinces independent powers by devolution from the centre and introduced the principle of responsibility into the provincial executives by the device known as dyarchy.

The deliberate instancy with which the new measure was evolved may seem all too typical of Indian governmental procedure, but it was in fact mainly caused by the magnitude of the measure, by the necessity of consultation and administrative preparation, and by the exigencies of the parliamentary system. Nevertheless, the delay involved was both unfortunate and dangerous in the fluid situation of the end-of-war and post-war days in India. What was in the main necessary deliberation to secure general consent seemed to many in India to be deliberate procrastination. The tension which such a time lag created was increased by another factor. The tempo of thought of the British officials in India, while broadly set in the new direction, lagged sensibly behind that of the London authorities, and still farther, of course, behind that

[1] Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms (Cd. 9109), p. 120.

of the Indian public. Reluctance to renounce the older glories was easily taken for stark hostility, distrust of innovations and untried personnel for contempt, expostulations and forebodings for attempts at sabotage. The British official and the home government too often appeared to be speaking from different briefs. If to this we add the social distresses caused by the influenza epidemic, economic dislocation, and the sudden return of thousands of men from abroad to a disorganized countryside, we shall find it easier to understand the complete change of outlook which overtook the Indian public between 1916 and 1919.

It is now time to turn to political India. In 1900 Indian nationalism was still in the main a tendency among middle class intellectuals rather than an organized political movement. The National Congress was a propaganda society rather than an organized political party. Its leaders like Gokhale, Tilak, Surendranath Bannerjea, Satyendranath Sinha, and Phirozeshah Mehta were already generals of note, but they were generals without a real army. The Congress was largely indebted to Lord Curzon for the next stage in its growth. His educational measure of 1903 touched an interest dear to the whole middle class while the Bengal partition was an issue which not only aroused passionate feelings in Bengal, but the sympathy of all educated India. These two issues, set against the background of the Russo-Japanese conflict, served to draw the new class together and to create a new sense of unity and common purpose. In Bengal, with its mammoth demonstrations and burnings of foreign cloth and its *swadeshi* movement, the excitement spread to the people at large, but elsewhere the middle class found itself endowed with a heightened self-consciousness and a quickened zeal. Instead of arranging for the decent demise of a dying institution, Lord Curzon by his measures welded a society of nationalists into a dynamic political party. By 1905 the Congress may be said to have captured the whole middle class and to have become the recognized organ of political India. But it had not as yet (except for a fleeting moment in Bengal) extended its influence to the masses. It could still be belittled as the plaything of the few, as unrealistic and doctrinaire.

During the Indian Edwardian era the Congress rapidly increased in stature while remaining confined to the class which gave it birth. It owed this to the distinction of its leaders, to the sanity of its judgement, and the recognition of its significance by the new governments in Britain and in India. It now underwent the experience of all nationalist movements, of tension between moderates and extremists. A small revolutionary group had already broken off; there remained a left-wing or 'extremist' group led by B. G. Tilak, anxious to continue uncompromising opposition to government and not proof against playing with the fire of violence, and a right wing or 'moderate' group who held to the tenets of classical liberalism, who saw in British officials their opponents but in British institutions their hope, who preached moderation in agitation and co-operation in action. A first sign of the new

status of the Congress was its acceptance in 1908 of the form of colonial freedom enjoyed by the dominion of Canada as its political goal. A second and more convincing sign was its handling of its own inner tension. The clash between moderates and extremists came in 1907 at the Surat Congress. The meeting broke up in disorder because of extremist attempts at coercion, but the episode ended with the assertion of moderate supremacy under Gokhale, Bannerjea, Sinha, and Mehta. A year later Tilak, whose nationalism had always been provincial and sectarian rather than all-Indian, and who had never been a constitutionalist except from expediency, was imprisoned for six years for incitement to violence. From then until the outbreak of war the moderates dominated the national movement. A third sign of growth was the part played by the leaders in elaborating and working the Morley-Minto reforms. In the rarefied atmosphere of Edwardian India they showed that they could breathe freely, could affect decisions and influence policy. The countenance of the government increased their prestige because it was seen that it was moving in their direction. The caution of its steps was not yet felt to be a serious hardship because hitherto it had not moved at all.

The outbreak of war brought forth, as has been mentioned, an outburst of enthusiastic support from the middle class for the allied cause. This was in itself an expression of its inner satisfaction with the developments of the last few years. But the mood soon changed. Expectations were largely increased, to be soured by British delays and the inconveniences and disappointments of the lengthening war. In these circumstances the extremists, who were virtually the nationalist opposition party, found a new hearing. In 1915 Gokhale, the wisest and ablest of the moderates, died at the early age of forty-nine. In 1916 Tilak, who had been released in 1914, emerged from his retirement. His views had enlarged since 1908 while his skill remained unchanged. He showed that he could now think both nationally and politically. He joined forces with Mrs. Besant and her Home Rule League, persuaded the Muslim League to support his programme in the agreement known as the Lucknow Pact,[1] and captured the Lucknow Congress at the close of the year. Henceforward the once formidable 'moderates' receded into the background. Within a few years they had metamorphized themselves into the Liberals, eloquently led by Srinivasa Sastri; thereafter they gradually dissolved into a number of generals without followers and finally became a group of elder statesmen of distinction. They remained fruitful of ideas, as in the case of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru; they were influential in private, and useful in public as go-betweens between government and Congress in times of difficulty. But they could no longer lead or command. They were the political *harcarahs* of modern India.

The Congress was now committed to a demand for *immediate* home rule while the government was contemplating *ultimate* self-government.

[1] The Lucknow Pact included the recognition of separate electorates.

The aim was the same, but the rate of progress different. A third member of this untuneful political orchestra must now be mentioned. Until 1906 the Muslims followed in the main Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's advice to hold aloof from the Congress. In 1906 the prospect of reform led them to form the Muslim League and to ask for special or communal constituencies which were embodied in the Morley-Minto reforms. Now they suddenly awoke to life. They had been made uneasy by the misfortunes of Turkey before 1914; the further disasters which befell her thereafter caused wisespread alarm. Britain was dismembering the Caliphate and therefore must be resisted. Thus the Khilafat movement was born, to be fostered by the pan-Islamic propaganda of the Young Turk movement, and brought to strength by the dismemberment of Turkey at the close of the war. The Muslims therefore joined forces with the Hindus in a joint national movement before the incredulous eyes of the British.

Such an alliance was loose and unstable, but for the moment the current of events bore it along. A final and personal element has now to be added to the situation, the advent of the Gujarati lawyer Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Gandhi (soon to become Mahatma or 'Great Soul') came from an orthodox *bania* group in Kathiawar, which he defied in order to read for the bar in London. He spent many years in South Africa where he experimented on diet, developed pacifist convictions, and led a life of simplicity and service to mankind. He was a stretcher-bearer in the South African war. He championed the rights of Indians in the Union and led with great skill and determination a *satyagraha*[1] movement against the government which extorted the respect of General Smuts and the admiring sympathy of Hardinge and India. In 1915 he returned to India, a disciple, as he believed of Gokhale. For some time he studied the situation; it was not till 1918, when Tilak was dying, that he came to the front. Then his western training enabled him to deal with the British on equal terms, his simplicity of life captured the imagination of the masses, whose feelings his uncanny insight enabled him to arouse at will, and his non-violent views alternately gratified, baffled, and exasperated the government. Here was the predestined leader of the New India, the man who could unite in a common purpose the peasant and the townsman, east and west, orthodox and radical. Gandhi was responsible for two great features in the next stage of nationalism. He made the movement nation-wide and he kept it non-violent.

The dissonance which finally brought the members of the orchestra into conflict concerned the administration of the public safety laws. At the outbreak of war the government armed itself, amid general consent, with a Defence of India Act, and possessed in addition Regulation III of 1818. By 1916 both sides were beginning to feel irked by these restrictions, the Congress because they interfered with the new home rule propaganda and the government because they

[1] Literally 'soul force'.

wanted more powers against terrorism and revolutionary activity. Here again there was no real difference of principle between government and Congress, but a fateful difference of emphasis. Nationalists supposed that the new powers were really intended against themselves, and were strengthened in this belief by the fact that the government probably over-estimated the extent of the revolutionary menace. In 1917 a committee of inquiry was appointed under an English judge, Mr. Justice Rowlatt, which produced much evidence of detailed subversive activity and made proposals for strengthening the law. Publication almost coincided with that of the Montagu-Chelmsford report; the two were read together. But whereas the proposals of the first were embodied in Bills in a matter of weeks, action on the other was delayed for a year. A now excited and irritable public read the worst into this unfortunate but only partly avoidable conjunction of events. In November 1918 the war ended; the government, however, continued with the Bills because the Defence of India Act would now lapse and they wanted to retain emergency powers. Indian suspicions thus seemed to be confirmed. The two Bills allowed judges to try political cases without juries in specified cases and gave provincial governments power of internment.[1] The Bills became law early in 1919 against the vote of every non-official Indian in the Imperial Legislative Council. The government's miscalculation of the original emergency was revealed by the fact that the powers of the Acts were never actually used.

The wind of suspicion and resentment was now fanning the already smouldering discontents of the people. To economic dislocation were added the special irritants of the first post-war months; the return of soldiers to altered conditions for which no preparations had been made, the mania of speculation leading to further distress, the failure of the average European to realize the radical changes which had occurred in India and the world, and the heady wine of self-determination now being decanted by President Wilson, who seemed then to be the master of Europe and the prophet of a new age. At this moment Mahatma Gandhi stepped forward into leadership. He organized *hartals* in protest against the Rowlatt Acts which speedily turned into riots in Delhi, Ahmedabad, Lahore, and Amritsar. In Amritsar on 13 April a prohibited meeting was held in the large enclosed space known as Jallianwallah Bagh, and was broken up without warning by a body of troops under General Dyer. The casualties were officially estimated at 379 killed and over 1,200 wounded.[2] This was followed by the proclamation of martial law, severe punitive measures, and humiliating orders.[3] Order was restored in the Panjab but a scar was drawn across Indo-British relations deeper than any which had been inflicted since the Mutiny. Racial feeling was intense. That resentment did

[1] Regulation III of 1818 only applied to the supreme government.
[2] There was only one exit which the troops occupied.
[3] e.g. public floggings and a crawling order.

not flame into an insurrection must be attributed to two factors. The government (though tardily in October) appointed a committee of inquiry[1] which censured General Dyer and criticized the administration of martial law. Secondly, the national movement was now led by Gandhi who set his face against violence, though many of his actions seemed to incite it. He was, in a sense, the government's best friend at thattime. In August 1920 the Congress rejected the new reforms and launched under Gandhi's leadership a non-co-operation movement with the government. This included resignation of office, withdrawal from schools and colleges, and boycott of the coming elections The movement gained an unprecedented all-India character from the support of the Muslims of the *Khilafat* movement, led by the adventuring brothers Muhammad Ali and Shaukat Ali. It was at this time that Pt. Motilal Nehru of Allahabad donned the Congress uniform of *khaddar* to become shortly second only to Gandhi in authority. The positive success of the movement was limited; resignations from office were few, the schools and colleges were dislocated only for a time, one-third of the electorate went to the polls.[2] Congress was not represented in the new councils, but ministries were formed, and the new system worked. But great excitement prevailed for many months marked by periodical outbreaks of violence always regretted by the Mahatma. By the end of 1921 it became clear that the movement had passed its peak and that the government would not be overthrown. The Moplah outbreak in Malabar in August 1921 alarmed moderate opinion; the attempted boycott of the Prince of Wales on his visit in the autumn of 1921 led to further violence and early in 1922 Lord Reading used the occasion of the Chauri-Chaura outrage to arrest Gandhi himself. He was sentenced to six years imprisonment but released early in 1924. Thus the movement ended in apparent failure. But things were never the same again. These events formed a psychological watershed in the development of modern India. The 'colonial' mentality had been thrown off; nationalists felt themselves to be members of an adult nation, able to treat with the government on equal terms. The government, on its part, never sank back into its old complacency. It realized that the Congress was a formidable force, though it was not yet willing to admit that it was the dominant force in the country. It was confirmed in the new policy, if by nothing else, by the knowledge of the consequences of any attempt to go back on it. After four years of storm and stress government and people began slowly and painfully to approach each other again.

(ii) *The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms*

The principles of the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals, usually now known as the Montford reforms, were the recognition of self-government as the goal of British policy in India, the realization of that

[1] Report of the Hunter Committee 1920 (Cmd. 681).
[2] In 1952 the percentage was about 50.

principle by instalments and judgement by the British of the moment and manner of taking each step as a result of the co-operation received and responsibility shown. This last provision was secured by the necessity of parliamentary enactment for each change in India and the provision in the Act for an inquiry at the end of each decade as a basis for further action. Self-government meant responsible parliamentary government, for nothing further was heard of the old 'durbar' principle. The introduction of responsibility into the constitution was effected by means of 'dyarchy', the invention of the apostle of imperial unity, Lionel Curtis.[1] Self-government, which had begun at the local level, was now to be extended to the provinces. In addition the principle of devolution was introduced as a means of giving greater scope to the provincial governments, and of forming a half-way house between the old centralism and federalism for which opinion generally was not ready.

We will begin with the policy of devolution, which intimately affected the whole administrative structure. Hitherto the provinces had been subordinate to the centre in both finance and legislation. Devolution was effected in the financial sphere by abolishing the former 'divided heads of revenue'.[2] Instead, revenue from irrigation, excise, land tax, and stamps was allotted to the provinces, while that from customs, income tax, posts, salt, and the railways went to the Centre. The provinces were thus endowed with a certain financial flexibility with which to finance their own measures. In the legislative sphere powers over certain subjects devolved upon the provinces, the others being retained by the Centre. Power to legislate on certain subjects, though provincialized in administration, were also retained by the Centre.[3] Exceptions could be made with the Governor-General's sanction. The powers retained by the Centre were those which pertained to the whole of India; they included defence, foreign affairs, communications, commerce, customs, the all-India services, and in addition the 'residuary' powers of legislation, or all powers not specifically handed over to the provinces, were retained by the Centre.

In the executive sphere there was no radical change in the central government. The executive was still irresponsible. But power was taken to enlarge the executive council and it was understood that, apart from the Viceroy and the commander-in-chief, half of the members would be Indians. In practice there were three Indian members in a council of seven besides the Viceroy. In the provinces the new principle of dyarchy was introduced. This was in idea a division of the administration into halves, one of which was controlled by councillors responsible only to the governor and ultimately the Secretary of State, and the other by ministers responsible to the provincial councils as well. To match this division of executive authority there was also an

1 The founder and for many years editor of *The Round Table*.
2 Land tax, income tax, stamp duties, and excise.
3 e.g. irrigation, High Courts, prisons, factories, new universities.

administrative division. The subjects of administration were divided into 'Reserved' and 'Transferred'. The reserved subjects were directly controlled by the governor and his councillors. These covered land revenue and laws, justice, the police, irrigation, and labour matters. The transferred subjects were controlled by the responsible ministers. They were local self-government, education, public health, public works, agriculture, and co-operative societies. The broad distinction made was between 'law and order' and 'nation-building' departments.

Great changes were made in the legislative councils. At the Centre a bicameral legislature was instituted. The Legislative Assembly replaced the Imperial Legislative Council with 106 elected and 40 nominated (25 of them official) members. It sat for three years with the power of earlier dissolution. To it was added a Council of State of 61 members, with an unofficial majority, elected for five years. The official 'bloc' at the centre thus disappeared. The provincial councils were also largely increased.[1] At least 70 per cent. of their members were to be non-official. To accord with the new status of the provinces and make the new system possible the United Provinces, the Panjab, Bihar and Orissa, and later Burma (1923) and the Frontier Province (1932) were given both governors and councils.

The possibility of deadlock between an irresponsible executive and the legislature at the centre was obvious. The partially irresponsible executive in the provinces might be faced with hostile council votes or a refusal of the council to support any ministers. These difficulties were provided for by the reserve powers of the Viceroy and governors. The governors were empowered to administer the transferred departments themselves in the event of the absence of ministers. Viceroy and governors were given a power of legislation by ordinance valid for six months in the event of emergency. They were allowed to pass Bills over the heads of the legislatures if they were certified to be necessary for the safety and tranquillity of India and also to authorize expenditure in the same way. This was the process known as 'certification'.[2] Certain heads of expenditure, such as that of defence at the centre, were not subject to popular vote.

The array of new councils was backed by a new electoral system. This had two features, the nature of the franchise and the arrangement of constituencies. Apart from certain special qualifications, such as the possession of a university degree or membership of a chamber of commerce, the general qualification was based on property, the payment of income or house tax in the towns and of land tax in the country. This was graduated from provincial council to Assembly and Council of State, being varied according to local conditions with the purpose of enfranchizing the same class of persons everywhere. The system gave over 5 million voters to the provincial councils, nearly

[1] The Bengal Council had 139 members, Madras 127, and Bombay 111.
[2] In the provinces this power was limited to reserved subjects.

1 million for the Legislative Assembly and some 17,000 discreet persons for the Council of State.

The constituencies were divided into 'general' and 'special'. The special constituencies, as before, represented special interests such as universities, great landholders, industry, and commerce. The general constituencies contained the voters provided by the franchise explained above. But they were further divided not as to qualification, but as to the class of the voter. This was the principle of communal representation, first allowed in 1909 for six Muslim seats and now reluctantly but widely extended. The general division was between Muslims and non-Muslims for all elections, on the plea that Muslim voters (through poverty) being fewer in numbers proportionately to their population in any given constituency, would be in danger of being swamped by the others. But the Sikhs had such constituencies in the Panjab, the Indian Christians in Madras, together with Anglo-Indians and Europeans in certain provinces. Communal representation had come to stay.

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CHAPTER 4

The Montford Era

FEW Acts of state have aroused more criticism from more varied points of view than the Government of India Act of 1921. It was criticized for going too far and for not going far enough, for being unworkable, and for working all too effectively. But a constitutional measure must be judged by *all* its results, by what it makes possible in the future as well as by its defects and omissions. Over the years a noticeable shift in the centre of critical emphasis was observable. At first the question at issue was—does the Act accomplish anything positive at all? Both British and Indian left wing thought believed that it did not. During the middle twenties the argument revolved round the question, are the reforms workable? From the late twenties attention was concentrated on the further query, what is the next step? The first shift in emphasis implied acceptance of the positive content of the reforms, and the second of their practicability. Much criticism assumed the permanence of the reforms, whereas they were avowedly temporary and progressive in character. On the whole we may say that the criticism which insisted on the incompleteness of the reforms proved to be valid, that which pronounced them unworkable or pernicious, fallacious. The real case for consideration is how far they were suited to cover a transitional period in constitutional development. Here it may be said that on the whole they achieved their purpose in spite of serious defects in design. They transferred enough power to induce enough people to take part in them to make them workable. They proved capable of large developments along the lines laid down; they prepared the way for full responsibility and for federation; they provided an invaluable training in public life for the rising governing class. On the other hand they did not go far enough to disarm serious opposition from without or to remove suspicion and irritation from those who were within the system. The reforms were valid in that they provided a habitable posting house towards freedom. The achievement, all things considered, was great; the only sound criticism is that it might have been greater.

The great need of the day was to create confidence in the new (or newly revived) official outlook, and this could only have been achieved by going farther than the circumstances of the time in Britain made possible. A central point of criticism was the plan of dyarchy. The system certainly created suspicion without and friction within. The association of ministers with an irresponsible executive tended to discredit them in the eyes of ardent patriots; they were blamed for acts which were not their own. The more successful joint consultation proved, the more sweetly governors charmed ministerial fears and

doubts, the more the ministers were apt to be suspected of straying from the path of patriotic virtue and to find their popular position being undermined. In the executive itself lack of popular control over finance caused some ministers to feel that their departments were being deliberately starved of funds, while governors of good will found their efforts to promote development handicapped by the lack of flexibility in the provincial revenues. The sources of income like customs and income tax which were readily expansible were allotted to the Centre. Another difficulty, this time on the British side, was that the unpopular but necessary work of government, like the raising of taxes and the suppression of riots, fell to the irresponsible or reserved half of the administration. The British suffered all the odium for this kind of public act, while the ministers, for reasons given above, received little of the credit for their often real constructive work. There was another hindrance to the working of the reforms which was not in the nature of the reforms themselves. Apart from the Congress party, which represented national aspirations in general, there were few well-organized political bodies. With the Congress holding aloof, it was therefore easy for governors to fall into the habit of 'making a majority' by drawing ministers from opposing or self-seeking groups, who by their faction or inaction threw discredit on the system. Compromising coalitions usually produce loaves and fishes for the politicians rather than bread for the multitude.

The first period of the Montford era covered the term of the first elected councils from 1921 to 1924. The Congress boycotted the elections but could not prevent one-third of the electors going to the polls, or the moderates, who had dissociated themselves from the non-co-operation of Mahatma Gandhi, from being elected. Ministries could therefore be formed, but they worked under the shadow of an external opposition of unknown strength and of great prestige. At the centre there were no ministers, but it was soon seen that the disappearance of the official 'bloc' had made the supreme government newly sensitive to nationalist opinion. The Rowlatt Acts and the Press Act of 1910 were repealed, social measures dealing with conditions in factories and mines and workmen's compensation were passed, a beginning was made with the Indianization of the officers' cadre in the army under Lord Rawlinson's guidance, Indian membership of the new League of Nations was secured, her status alongside the dominions in the Imperial Conference assured, and the cause of Indians overseas (specially in South Africa) championed. The Lee Commission recommended a process of Indianization which would give Indians half the appointments in the senior services. On the other hand, the salt tax was doubled by the new process of certification in order to balance the budget. The loss of credit proved greater than the financial gain. The government had to cope, through 1921, with the non-co-operation movement and to quell frequent riots specially on the occasion of the Prince of Wales's visit. The negative aspects of these measures loomed more largely in the

popular mind than the positive; suspicion was not dissipated and political India, if somewhat impressed in spite of itself, remained unconvinced of the sincerity of British intentions.

In the provinces ministries were duly formed, but only in one province, that of Madras, was a single party strong enough to take office unaided. This was the Justice or non-Brahman party. Here the governor, Lord Willingdon, seized the opportunity to make its leader, the Raja of Panagal, Chief Minister, and so produce a semblance of responsible party government. This ministry carried out educational reforms and a radical measure affecting temple endowments which a British administration would have hesitated to launch. In the Panjab there was also a hopeful experiment. Mian Fazli-Husain and Choudhri Chothu Ram (both later knighted) combined to form an intercommunal *zamindars'* or country party in opposition to the urban interests. The party did not actually control the new council, but through the personality of its chiefs it dominated the situation. A programme of educational expansion was launched, land reforms carried through, and the troublesome problem of the control of Sikh *gurudwaras* settled in 1925 by handing them over to a popularly elected board of trustees. Elsewhere the ministries represented coalitions of groups and were hampered in their working both by financial stringency and the lack of firm public support.

Behind and beyond the councils ran the ebb and flow of the Congress non-co-operation movement. Mahatma Gandhi stimulated enthusiasm by promising *swaraj* within a year and with the unprecedented support of the Muslim Khilafatists there seemed for a time to be no limits which he might not pass. But in Lord Reading he found a statesman who had, in his own way, an insight as keen and a mind as subtle as his own. At first Reading's attitude seemed to be one of olympian detachment. He was in fact studying the situation and measuring the strength of the opposing forces. He divined the essential difference of their aims and the temporary nature both of their union and of the enthusiasm of the component parties. His policy was to watch and wait for the inherent disharmonies and illusions of the parties to reveal themselves and do his work for him. In the case of the Congress the maintenance of enthusiasm depended upon swift success. It could not stand either the steady functioning of government or a prospect of prolonged disorder or anarchy. The maintenance of government during 1921 and the disorders which punctuated that year and the beginning of the next provided both conditions. Enthusiasm cooled, apprehension increased; the final arrest of Mahatma Gandhi in 1922 came as a relief. A reaction within Congress began against his leadership which covered the next few years. The other half of the coalition had much weaker roots than the Congress. Its leaders were adventurers and its followers were buoyed up by romantic sympathy for the Turkish *Khalifa*. The reckless *hijrat* or migration to Afghanistan proved disastrous Muslim fears were

calmed by Ataturk's success in reviving Turkey and the ground was finally cut from beneath the feet of the movement by the deposition of the Sultan in 1923 and the abolition of the *Khilafat* itself in 1924. In these circumstances Muslim fears of Hindu domination reasserted themselves and the fraternalism of 1921 was replaced by the communal riots of 1924.

The collapse of the non-co-operation movement in 1922 left India in the relaxed condition of a patient released from a bout of fever. There was an interval of apathy in public feeling which was used for a reconsideration of policy by the various parties concerned. On the Muslim side there was a return to Indian horizons and communal politics. Within the Congress there was much heart-searching. The new doctor's non-violent drug had failed to effect the promised cure of foreign domination. The sceptics were led by C. R. Das, the last of the great Bengali leaders, and Pt. Motilal Nehru from the United Provinces. In 1923 it was determined to fight the new elections and to endeavour to subvert the reforms from within the councils. This was a point gained for the new régime for it admitted the significance of the councils; it was also a threat to it because a paralysis of the ministries might prevent the public from realizing their possibilities. The Congress secured forty-five seats in the Legislative Assembly, which was enough to fulminate, but not to wreck without assistance, and enough strength in Bengal and Bombay to prevent the formation of ministries. For the next few years the party fulfilled the role of a nationalist opposition at the centre, and was increasingly involved in the give and take of group politics in the provinces. A splinter group of 'Responsivists' under M. R. Jayakar appeared in Maharashtra. C. R. Das died in 1925, when it seemed that he might be about to play with Lord Birkenhead the part of a Gokhale with Morley in working out a fresh understanding between government and people. Leadership therefore remained with Motilal Nehru, a powerful figure who introduced a new discipline into his party. These years saw, on the government side, the final abolition of the hated cotton excise in 1926, the acceptance of the Lee Commission's proposals for the equalization of the proportions of Indians and Europeans in the higher services, and the mission of Srinivasa Sastri to South Africa followed by his appointment as the first Agent-General in 1926. But it was in the political question that the Congress and the country were really interested. For all the criticism of dyarchy it was now clear that there could be no going back on it; one could therefore only move forward. The Congress aim was to accelerate this movement, but it remained divided as to methods. As the disillusionment which came from the failure of non-co-operation led to the decision for council entry, so disappointment with the fruits of constitutional obstruction led to a revival of interest in direct action. The Mahatma, in ostentatious political retirement, carried on his 'untouchable' reform or *harijan* movement while waiting for an opportunity to swing the Congress again to his views. In these circumstances all sections looked

to government for a sign, which might prove a signal for renewed action or real co-operation. About 1925 government and Congress were in fact cautiously approaching one another. A conjunction like that of 1909 did not in fact take place because the political classes were still emotionally too disturbed by the events of 1919–21 to look at government proposals dispassionately, and because the ruling class in Britain, itself still suffering from the shock of war strain, was not ready to take bold enough views or able to find sufficiently imaginative leaders. By 1928 the mood of accommodation had gone, and events moved towards a fresh trial of strength.

The first response made by government was the appointment of the Muddiman Committee[1] to examine the working of the reforms. The majority recommended minor amendments, but the minority, led by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, declared that dyarchy was unworkable. This enabled all parties to unite in a demand for the grant of full self-government, to be worked out in its details by a round table conference. In April 1926 Lord Irwin succeeded to the Viceroyalty. His first move to promote communal harmony failed to divert the leaders from their constitutional concern. The government then looked to the Montford provision for periodical inquiries and determined to anticipate this provision by appointing a Commission two years earlier than legally required. The Simon Commission, led by Sir John (later Viscount) Simon and including the Labour prime minister to be, Mr. Attlee, was appointed in November 1927. This act had exactly the opposite effect to the one intended. Instead of conciliating, it outraged Indian sentiment, instead of providing a threshold for co-operation, it proved the prelude to conflict. The cause was the omission of any Indian from the Commission, which seemed, in the new atmosphere of the twenties, to cast a slur on the ability of Indians in political matters, to flout the idea of a round table conference, and by emphasizing parliamentary control of Indian affairs to challenge the right of Indians to work out their own destiny. It thus proved a great rallying cry for negative national sentiment. On its arrival and during its travels in 1928–9 it was subjected to hostile demonstrations and boycotted wherever Congress influence was strong enough. Its report was a constitutional masterpiece but its presence a political disaster. The Congress reaction went further than organizing processions and displaying black flags. The Madras Congress of 1927–8 declared independence to be the goal of Indian development. An All-parties Conference during 1928 produced a scheme of self-government known as the Nehru report,[2] and at the end of the year Mahatma Gandhi was welcomed back to the Congress fold. During 1929 Congress opinion hardened behind the demand for a round table conference as the prelude to the grant of dominion status. In Britain a Labour government succeeded Baldwin's Conservative administration and this enabled Lord Irwin to make a

[1] Presided over by Sir Alexander Muddiman, the home member.
[2] Its principal authors were Pt. Motilal Nehru and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru.

further effort to bridge the gulf between British and nationalist opinion. Taking his political life in his hands he persuaded the new government to agree to a declaration, in the autumn of 1929, that dominion status was the goal of British policy and that a round table conference would be called to consider the next step. This represented a major achievement, for the declaration was agreed between the major elements of both British parties, which meant that it was now generally recognized that nationalism was the dominant and not simply a major force in India. It is impossible not to regret that the responsible national leaders did not recognize that in Lord Irwin they had to deal with a statesman of unusual insight and perception as well as of great influence and that the situation promised greater results from co-operation than intransigence. But the die went the other way. After appearing to accept the new proposals Mahatma Gandhi insisted on a promise that the round table conference should draw up a scheme for full dominion status with immediate effect. On its refusal, regardless of a revival of terrorism in the Panjab, he launched a civil disobedience movement with his walk from the Sabarmati ashram to the sea at Dandi where he symbolically manufactured illicit salt.

The civil disobedience movement of 1930 differed from the non-co-operation movement in 1921 in important respects. Both were avowedly non-violent, but whereas the first was passively the second was actively revolutionary. The first hoped to bring government to a standstill by withdrawing from the administration; the second sought to paralyse the government by the mass performance of specific illegal acts. Mass arrests would arouse general sympathy and gradually make administration impossible. In choosing these acts the Mahatma showed his usual insight into the popular mind, for he began with the illicit manufacture of salt in defiance of the unpopular salt tax. Though the Muslims gave him little support[1] he received a wide response from Hindu India, hypnotized once more by his combination of Hindu saint, western lawyer-politician, and poor man's friend.[2] One feature of the movement was the wide participation of women in the record of whose emancipation it proved a landmark. Another was the boycott of British goods which proved widespread and effective. A third was periodic outbreaks of violence such as the Sholapur riot and a serious rising in the Frontier Province. At this juncture the Simon Report was published and added fuel to the flames by limiting itself to proposing self-government in the provinces. Its suggestion that responsibility at the Centre should await a federation joined by the princes was thought to be tantamount to indefinite postponement. But the Viceroy persevered amid riots without, divided counsels at home, hesitations and doubt within his own circle. He succeeded in convincing the moderates that the government was not bound by the conclusions of the Simon

[1] They had been alienated by the rejection of separate electorates in the Nehru Report.

[2] There were about 60,000 arrests in the first six months of the movement.

Report and in inducing them to attend the round table conference. The conference itself proved to be a turning-point in Indo-British relations. For the last time during the British period the princes gave a lead by declaring their readiness to accept federation (and with it some curtailment of their powers) provided that the principle of responsibility was introduced into the Centre. In so doing the princes hoped, among other things, to reduce their dependence upon London; they did not, as was at first supposed, intend as a class to introduce any element of responsible government into their own states. But the prospect of States participation altered the Labour government's attitude to the introduction of responsibility at the Centre, and this in turn modified the Congress attitude to the government's policy. When the conference concluded on 19 January 1931, the prime minister, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, announced that 'with the legislature constituted on a federal basis', the government 'would be prepared to recognise the principle of the responsibility of the executive to the legislature'. The Congress Working Committee including Gandhi were forthwith released and Lord Irwin took the novel step of holding direct conversations with the Mahatma. They were conducted on a man-to-man basis and lasted from 17 February to 4 March. These talks marked the end of the old official olympianism. Relations were never so stiff or the authorities so aloof again. The government was now anxious to conciliate Congress and the Congress leaders for their part realized that their movement was tiring quicker than the government, that the public mood was for a settlement and that they had already gained as much as they could hope for. The talks ended with what was known as the Gandhi-Irwin truce. The main terms were the ending of the civil disobedience, the release of political prisoners except those convicted of crimes of violence, and the representation of the Congress at the second session of the round table conference. The truce was ratified by the general Congress meeting at Karachi in April, which at the same time appointed the Mahatma as its sole representative.

The fates were not kind to this large-minded attempt to heal the breach between the two peoples and to plan the future jointly. The execution of Bhagat Singh for terrorism in the Panjab while the Karachi Congress was sitting revived extremist sentiment, while the Cawnpore communal riots embittered the Muslims. They were not pacified by Gandhi's promise to agree to any demand from a united community, since they well knew that the Mahatma's group of Congress Muslims under Dr. Ansari would never agree to the wishes of the majority. Disputes broke out in the ranks of Congress itself which experienced some of the pains of the demobilization process, while a conflict began between the Sen Gupta and Subash Chandra Bose factions which permanently weakened the Congress in Bengal. In Britain the financial crisis absorbed attention, leading to the fall of the Labour government and the installation of a 'National' administration, led by Ramsay Macdonald it is true, but overwhelmingly Conservative

in composition. The clear headed Sir Samuel Hoare (later Viscount Templewood) reigned at the India Office in the place of Mr. Wedgewood Benn (later Viscount Stansgate) while the amiable but ageing and less patient Willingdon had succeeded Lord Irwin in Delhi.

In these altered circumstances the second session of the round table conference met. At the outset the government proposed to separate the question of provincial autonomy from that of responsibility at the Centre. This was withdrawn on the unanimous opposition of the Indian delegates, but it was clear that some stiffening of the British attitude had taken place. Mahatma Gandhi was not slow to recognize this. He confined himself to a few general speeches and failed to take the opportunity of his presence in London for direct negotiations with the principal British statesmen. He estranged Muslims and untouchables by claiming to represent all India. Though he praised the new Secretary of State's frankness and integrity, the old devil of suspicion raised its head again to prevent him from seeing the distance the predominant Conservative party had travelled in a few years and the fact that it had in essence accepted the work of its predecessor. On the other side there was not so much a change of intention as in the *tone* of approach. The language of positive achievement and conscious movement towards a goal was replaced by cautious provisos, anxious care in devising safeguards, and absorption in schedules and tables. The sense of deliberate movement was lost and the government appeared again to be applying the brakes to another vehicle rather than propelling its own. In this atmosphere the Indian parties failed to agree upon the communal allotment of seats in the legislatures, so that the British were compelled to undertake an award. The second session closed in disappointment and foreboding.

Within three weeks of Mahatma Gandhi's return to India he was once more in prison and the Congress a proscribed organization. In his absence the militant Red Shirt movement had been started by Abdul Ghaffar Khan, claiming Congress allegiance, terrorism had reappeared in Bengal and a no-rent campaign had commenced in the United Provinces. It would seem that the forces within Congress desiring a further trial of strength were stronger than those prepared to give co-operation a real trial. They were helped by a new stiffness on the government side which now appeared to think that conciliation had paid few dividends and that a firm stand would break Congress militancy. In this latter view they proved to be correct, but their action involved the penalty of a further prolongation of the besetting suspicion which seemed for a moment in 1931 to have been banished. The Mahatma could either have determined to give co-operation a further trial, in which case he would have had to discipline the unruly element within the Congress, or, siding with them, have temporized while recruiting his forces for a further campaign. He did neither, with the result that the second civil disobedience movement went off at half cock. The fact was that the country as a whole was tired of strife and

its attendant losses; it would sympathize with but no longer follow the Congress along the revolutionary path. The Congress leaders were temporarily out of touch with public opinion. The number of political prisoners rose to 34,458 in April 1932, about half the total for many months during 1930, but by July had sunk to 4,683. Thus the movement petered out and the government could claim a victory. But the country remained sullen though peaceful. There was no breakaway to a more hopeful policy as after the collapse of the non-co-operation movement; instead there was a somewhat sceptical waiting on events. Those who believed that the reforms had substance waited without enthusiasm and those who did not looked on with cynical detachment. In this mood of aloofness the country watched the slow gestation of the new system while Lord Willingdon's term ran out. Gradually it was impressed by the magnitude of the preparations and by the fact that the national government continued to go forward, despite the persistent opposition of a 'die-hard' group led by Mr. Churchill and Lord Lloyd and the revival of civil disobedience. These measures included the third session of the round table conference, the communal award of 1932, and a series of committees to settle the details of outstanding questions and a prolonged series of parliamentary inquiries and discussions. The new system became law as the Government of India Act of 1935, and Lord Linlithgow went out in the following year to inaugurate it.

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CHAPTER 5

The Genesis of Pakistan

BEFORE 1930 the word Pakistan had not been heard of; in 1940 it was adopted by the Muslim League as its official aim; in 1947 it appeared as a new state containing more than 70 million people. Clearly such a rapid growth leading to such spectacular success must have sprung from roots deeper than purely political motives and stretching far beyond the twenties of the twentieth century. According to the 1941 census the Muslims of India then numbered some 92 millions or 24 per cent. of a total population of 389 millions. These became the '100 millions' of propaganda, which represented, however, an accurate enough total in the general propaganda figure of '400 millions'. The remaining 42 millions included all other groups such as the Sikhs, Christians, Jains, Parsis, and the primitive tribes of the forest areas. The Muslims thus constituted one in four of the total population. They were easily the largest minority in the country, and in fact the only one, except for the Sikhs in the Panjab, to be politically important. In their own eyes they were not a minority at all, but a separate 'nation', and it is this fact which may serve as a first clue to an understanding of the Pakistan movement.

The Muslims of India have always regarded themselves as separate from the rest of the people, though they have not always rejected the title of Indian. The Pakistan movement threw the cloak of Western nationalism over the Islamic conception of a separate culture and so converted a cultural and religious entity into a separatist political force. To understand how this could come about among a group of diverse racial origin, speaking many languages and geographically scattered, it is necessary to delve into the distant past. The first Muslims to enter India in force were the Arabs of Muhammad bin Kasim who conquered Sind in A.D. 712. From that time onwards Sind became gradually predominantly Muslim. The next step was the Ghaznavid conquest of the Panjab by Mahmud of Ghazni in the early eleventh century. The Panjab also, in the course of centuries became a mainly Muslim area though the Hindus (and later the Sikhs) continued to be a much more significant element in the population than in Sind. Kashmir was occupied in 1346, and also adopted Islam except for the small though significant group of Kashmiri Brahmans.

The great irruption of Islam into the main body of India followed the defeat of Prithvi Raj at Thanesar in 1192 and the capture of Delhi by Muhammad Ghori. Within twenty years the Muslim Turks had reached the Bay of Bengal and in little more than a century had

penetrated as far as Madura in the extreme south. From that time forward until 1760 they were the dominant force in India. During four of the five and a half centuries northern India was ruled by two Muslim empires;[1] the Deccan as far as the Kistna was under Muslim control from the early fourteenth century and twice the whole sub-continent was virtually united under a single *raj*.

It was in these circumstances that one-quarter of the population became Muslim. That population was, however, by no means homogeneous. The first element was the immigrant, Arab, Turk, Pathan, Afghan, Persian, who in groups or tribes or in single families seeking their fortunes, settled in the country. Many of the Muslims of the old Panjab, Sind, and frontier regions belonged to tribal groups. Some such, like the Rohillas in the early eighteenth century in Rohilkhund, or the Sayyids of Barha, settled farther down country, but there is no evidence of large-scale Muslim folk movements like those of the Sakas, the Kushans, or the Huns, or the early Aryan-speaking peoples themselves. In the main the Indian Muslims were of Indian origin. Many individual families throughout the period came in from Persia and central Asia, attracted by opportunities of service and honour. The ancestors of the Nizam entered in this way in the seventeenth century, as did those of the Nawab Wazirs of Oudh. Mirza Najaf Khan, the last great Mughul minister under Shah Alam, was a late case of an immigrant rising to distinction. Some families still reveal their origin by their names, like the Bokharis. The Turanian and Iranian factions were a feature of Mughul political life.

The next element among the Muslims arose from intermarriage. The Muslim rule of India east of the Sutlej was at first that of an army of occupation. Officers and men sought wives and contracted unions, and thus a population of mixed racial origin grew up all over India. Unlike the later Anglo-Indians they never dissociated themselves from the country of their domicile; religion rather than racial feeling was the force that bound them together. It is probably from this class that most of the later Muslim leadership has come. The third element of the Muslim community, and by far the largest, was the result of conversion. Some of this was forcible, but we must beware of placing too much emphasis on this undoubted practice. Some Muslim chroniclers gloried in it with the probable exaggeration of enthusiasm. It occurred in quantity only during campaigns before the Hindus were generally recognized to be, like Christians and Jews, 'the people of a book', and then chiefly in the early rather than the later part of the period. There were no doubt individual cases of conversion by pressure throughout this long period. After forcible conversions came conversions from interest or hope of reward. There was a steady trickle of breakaways from the upper Hindu ranks for the sake of advancement in the Muslim state as well as from conviction or both. Khan Jahan, the minister of Firoz Shah, was an example of this type. Most took Muslim

[1] The Delhi Sultanate 1192–1398, the Mughul empire, 1526–1760.

names, but some, like the Muslim Puris, retained their old family names.

But the largest class of conversions were certainly voluntary and came from the lower levels of Hindu society. To this phenomenon must be attributed the mass conversion of eastern Bengal, which is now eastern Pakistan, whether we ascribe it to relief on the part of a Buddhist peasantry at deliverance from Brahman oppression or the straight conversion of a virtually animistic countryside. Such conversions were not confined to eastern Bengal, but occurred all over the country. In general they were from the lower classes, because Islam could offer to these people a hope and a status denied them in the Hindu system. But the existence of Muslim Rajputs shows that in the north-west it occurred in the upper strata of society as well. These conversions were not procured by kings or soldiers and introduce a new factor into the building up of the Muslim community. This factor is the Sufi movement. Sufi saints or *pirs* were present in the Panjab in the eleventh century and they soon followed the armies farther into India in the thirteenth. Many of them were men of great learning, but they were guides to the good life as well as scholars and poets who had their *murids* or disciples. Some like Kh. Muin-ud-din Chishti of Ajmer and Kh. Nizam-ud-din Aulia of Delhi settled near cities where their tombs became shrines and centres of devotion and proselytism. Others lived in groups in *khanqahs* or monasteries, the traces of which are numerous in old Muslim cities. These people were in general aloof from the courts and the orthodox *ulema* of the colleges; they appealed direct to the people and were the evangelists as well as the spiritual preceptors of Islam. They are often thought of as forming a bridge of understanding with the Hindu *bakhti* movement, with their emphasis on the inner life and the unity of all believers in the one God. Kabir, the Muslim weaver who preached the unity of religions and became the founder of a Hindu sect, is an example of this. But an even more important aspect of their work was the propagation of Islam among the Indian people. The Sufis, rather than kings, warriors, or adventurers, were responsible for the bulk of the Muslims in the sub-continent. And they as a class, for all the eclecticism of some of them, were responsible for the sense of separateness and sense of mission which tended to bind together people of the most diverse racial and social origin into a cultural and religious unity.

We thus find in the eighteenth century a large Muslim community scattered throughout India. It possessed a large aristocracy of office and landholders, a small middle class of professional men and government servants, and a large proletariat of agriculturists and artisans. The smallness of the middle class was due to Hindu competition on the one hand and the fact that for Muslims of talent under a Muslim régime the ladder of promotion led quickly upwards to the higher appointments. The eighteenth century was a time of stress for the community. Their political dominion collapsed, and with it went their

hold on the chief offices of state. The British monopolized (from the time of Cornwallis) these offices for themselves, leaving the upper classes to jostle for subordinate posts with Hindus, or else to stand aloof in pride and poverty. Soon western education was added as another and unacceptable condition for office. Immigration from the north-west came to an end, except from among the untutored Afghans. The decline of Islam in its homeland reduced the value of such contacts as remained, thus depriving Indian Islam of the spiritual and cultural streams which had so long nourished it. Islam in India was politically depressed and culturally isolated. With the weakening of these Islamic impulses Hindu practices and social customs, like the worship of saints' tombs and caste customs, already well established, became more widespread. It became difficult to tell whether some groups were more Muslim or Hindu in their outlook. The widespread resumption of rent-free lands and the ruin of the Bengal weaving industry further depressed the community.

It was in this condition of political eclipse and cultural depression that Indian Islam was confronted with the challenge of the West. At first bad seemed to grow worse, for while the Muslims stood aloof, the Hindus took advantage of the new western education, thus securing a lead in the new world and the administration which they never lost. The Mutiny made things worse, for in spite of its Hindu origin the Muslims were thought to have revealed their disloyalty to and hatred of the new régime. But the Muslims were too numerous and too vigorous to be absorbed or permanently reduced to insignificance. The first movements of revival came from within and may be described as those of internal renewal or purification. These were amongst the body of the people. Then came a movement among the leaders in tardy response to western influences. It was the Pakistan movement which finally welded these two together into a national movement comparable to that of the Indian Congress.

The first of these movements can be traced to Shah Wali-ullah of Delhi (1703–62), described as one of the greatest theologians of Muslim India. He translated the Quran into Persian, while two of his sons added an Urdu version. He began a movement for reform which was carried on by his son Shah Abdul Aziz. In the hands of his disciple Sayyid Ahmad of Bareilly, who was influenced by Wahabi ideas from Arabia, this became the militant 'Wahabi' movement[1] of the early nineteenth century, with its headquarters at Patna. India was regarded as *dar-ul-harb*, or a land of war, since it was under infidel rule. Sayyid Ahmad's efforts, however, were directed against the Sikhs, as being the chief Muslim oppressors of the day. He established himself in the Swat valley where he waged a *jihad* or holy war until his death in battle with the Sikhs in 1831. Two parallel movements in lower India were led by Sheikh Karamat Ali of Jaunpur, another disciple of Shah Abdul

[1] So called because Sayyid Ahmad came under Wahabi influence. His movement was akin in *temper* but not in theology to that of the Wahabis.

Aziz, and Haji Shariat-ullah of Faridpur.[1] The latter was involved in agrarian agitation, but on the whole the two movements were peaceful. They were actively propagandist and did much to purify and strengthen east Indian Islam. Karamat Ali's work has been thus described:[2]

> For forty years he moved up and down the elaborate river system of eastern Bengal in a flotilla of small boats, carrying the message of Islamic regeneration and reform from the Nagas of Assam to the inhabitants of Sandip and other islands in the Bay of Bengal. His flotilla of country craft was like a travelling college. One boat was the residence of his family, another was reserved for the students and disciples accompanying him, while the third was for *dars* and lectures and prayers.

Mention should also be made of the Ahmadiya sect founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1838–1908) with its headquarters at Qadian in the Panjab. It gathered a numerous following in the Panjab and was notable for organization and missionary activity, both in India and abroad, including England. But its founder's claim to prophethood and to the function of completing or adding to the Muslim revelation caused the sect to be considered heretical by the main body of Muslims. It has been notable for the distinction of some of its adherents,[3] rather than for its influence on the development of Indian Islam as a whole.

The response of Indian Islam to the West came not from the Muslim princes who showed a curious imperviousness to Western thought while they toyed with European trinkets or adopted superficial European manners. Furniture, wines, and uniforms were the limit of their interest. The first concrete move came from Sayyid Ahmad Khan of Delhi. He was born in 1817 and took service under the British in 1837, rising to the rank of subordinate judge. He remained loyal in the Mutiny and published an influential essay on its causes. Sayyid Ahmad came of an aristocratic family of central Asian origin; his combination of oriental with western learning fitted him to be an interpreter between the conservative East and the encroaching West; his forceful character enabled him to impress his ideas on his people while his sterling integrity was proof against calumny. He visited England in 1869 and retired from service in 1876. In 1878 he became a member of the Governor-General's Legislative Council and was knighted in 1888. He died in 1898, the acknowledged grand old man of Indian Islam. The Sayyid was convinced that the Indian Muslims must make terms with the West, both politically and culturally. He considered that the tolerance and security of the British régime entitled it to be included in the *Dar-ul-Islam* or region of peace. The British régime having been accepted as in the providence of God, Muslims should win British approval by active loyalty. Otherwise they would be out-distanced in the race for governmental favour by the Hindus, as had already

[1] Known as the *Faraidhi* movement (pronounced Faraizi).
[2] S. Ikram, *Cultural Heritage of Pakistan*, p. 15.
[3] e.g. Sir Zafar-ullah Khan, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, 1947–55.

happened in the case of education. A modern education, indeed, was the *sine qua non* of the community's progress, and the Sayyid therefore became a champion of western knowledge, which should not be inconsistent with the tenets of Islam. The fruit of this advocacy was the opening of the Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh in 1875, with its British principals and staff,[1] its residential system, its mosque and religious instruction, its balance of eastern and western learning. In 1920 the college became the Aligarh Muslim University. Aligarh both enabled the talented young Muslim to compete on terms with the Hindu for government service and in public life, and gave him a dynamic which his community seemed to have lost.

For Sir Sayyid was not concerned with material things only. His movement was one of general reform. It was inspired by the thought that the Muslims of India were a separate people or nation who must not be absorbed within Hinduism, and that the essence of Islam was consistent with the best that the West had to offer. He was, in fact, a Muslim modernist appealing to general principles outside the scope of the four recognized schools of theology. He accepted the mission of the Prophet and God's revelation in the Quran. But he claimed that Reason was also an attribute of God and Nature his handywork.[2] The Quran and Islam might therefore be interpreted on the basis of reason to meet modern needs and problems. The achievements of the West, so far as they rested on reason, might thus be welcomed and assimilated. He laid particular stress upon science, as being the characteristic feature of western progress. His first institution at Aligarh was a scientific society. In pressing this point of view he was much helped by the existence of the strong Greek tradition in Islamic thought, and by the common Judaic background which western Christianity shared with Islam. Thus fortified, the Sayyid conducted a campaign on two fronts, against the isolationist conservative Muslims on the one hand and European critics on the other. This tended to replace backward-looking by forward-looking views and to restore the shaken confidence of those in close contact with western thought.

These ideas attracted distinguished supporters, who came to be known collectively as the Aligarh school. Among them may be mentioned two men nurtured in the pre-Mutiny renaissance at the Delhi college, Maulvi Nazir Ahmad and Maulvi Zaka-ullah, the poets Altaf Husain, Hali, and Maulvi Shibli Numani, the scholar Khuda Baksh, and the educationist Yusuf Ali. The work of Sayyid Amir Ali,[3] though in general accord, had a slant of its own. His *Spirit of Islam* was the best apologetic of Islam for the non-Muslim which had appeared, while his *History of the Saracens* was a tonic for the Muslims

[1] e.g. Sir Theodore Beck, the first principal, Sir Theodore Morison, Sir Thomas Arnold.

[2] His followers came to be called *Necharis*, from the word 'nature,' as tending to follow nature rather than revelation.

[3] 1849–1928, first Indian member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

themselves. He emphasized the personality of the Prophet and so introduced what may be described as prophetic hero-worship. But though emphasizing the value of tradition, he was also a reformer, advocating women's education. His insistence on the glories of historical Islam provided a starting-point for the leaders of the *Khilafat* movement and a link between them and the westernized liberals.

Sayyid Ahmad's programme was admirably suited to the position of Indian Islam in the Victorian world. It made possible the assimilation of elements of a culture which then seemed irresistible; it provided for gradual political progress at a time when that seemed to be the only sort of progress possible. With the advent of the twentieth century conditions changed. Something more dynamic than reason in the religious sphere was needed, and something more radical than advisory councils as a political programme. Europe itself was changing with the development of industrialism; the old Islamic world was threatened and trying to save itself by pan-Islamic Caliphate ideas. In India itself came the first signs of the transfer of power to Indian hands, with the ultimate prospect of a Hindu government. The collapse of Turkey before the Balkan states in 1912 and then during the first World War made Europe appear to many for a time as again the enemy of Islam. It was this which gave strength to the *Khilafat* movement in the post-war years. The overriding need, as it seemed, to defend Islam, justified the Hindu alliance then contracted. The revival of Turkey in 1922 and her emergence as a secularist state reassured the liberals while removing the whole basis of the conservative programme. From that time on the Hindu majority, personified in the enigmatic figure of Gandhi, seemed to be the main threat to a separate Muslim existence. But there could be no return to the days of the Sayyid. Indian Islam needed a more dynamic creed and a larger vision and found it in the writings of Sir Muhammad Iqbal.[1]

Iqbal wrote mainly in Persian and only produced one work in English.[2] His theme was the all-embracing sufficiency of Islam as expressing a dynamic spirit of struggle for spiritual freedom. Islam was not merely a valid religion to be compared favourably with others; it was the root and branch of all religious experience. It was not a fixed and precious deposit to be treasured with the zeal of the antiquarian, but a living principle of action which could give purpose and remake worlds. Europe was enmeshed in its greed for wealth and lust for power.[3] It was for Islam to create true values and to assert man's mastery of nature by constant struggle. It was Nietszche in an Islamic setting. Iqbal's teaching provided the young Muslim generation with a view

[1] 1876–1938.

[2] *Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, Lahore, 1930.

[3] Iqbal's opinion of the West is given in the following two couplets:
'The glitter of modern civilisation dazzles the sight,
But it is only a clever piecing together of false gems.'
'The wisdom or science in which the wise ones of the West took such pride:
Is but a warring sword in the bloody hands of greed and ambition'.

which out-moderned the moderns, but which yet seemed distinctive and Islamic. Sayyid Ahmad Khan gave Indian Islam a sense of separate existence; Iqbal a sense of separate destiny.

The precipitation of this rich solution of thought and feeling into the crystals of a political movement required an external catalyst, and this was provided by fear. Sayyid Ahmad Khan gave the community a new sense of justification and a new line of conduct; he also made possible a new sense of security by pointing the way to a reconciliation with the ruling power. But the sense of separateness from others involved an immediate reaction to any suggestion of commingling or absorption in a plural society. The British might rule, for they showed no sign of interfering with Islam; that was the basis of the Sayyid's confidence in them. But would a hypothetical Hindu government do the same? As soon as the Congress was formed in 1885 the Sayyid took alarm. Majority Indian rule for him meant Hindu rule, and Hindu rule meant the risk of cultural absorption. He had already declined to support Amir Ali's 'National Muhammadan Association' in Calcutta in 1877 as tending to subversive activity. Only a small group, particularly in Bombay, supported the Congress to become the nucleus of the later nationalist Muslims.

The Muslims in general watched the growth of Congress from a distance and stood aloof from its controversies with Lord Curzon. But having allowed it to become dominantly Hindu in character through their abstention, they took alarm at the first signs of concessions to its demands. From this sprang the deputation to Lord Minto in 1906, led by the Agha Khan, which demanded separate electorates for Muslims in any representative system which might be introduced. At the same time they did what the Sayyid had frowned upon during his life by forming the All-India Muslim League. The Morley-Minto reforms with their separate electorates for Muslim landholders, and their retention of irresponsible power by the British, satisfied them for the time so far as India was concerned. But almost immediately the Muslims took alarm at the misfortunes of Turkey and there followed the *Khilafat* movement. Pan-Islamic sentiment overbore the nascent local Muslim nationalism and antipathy to British Turkish policy local fear of Hindu rule. The outward expressions of this emotional upheaval were the Lucknow Pact of 1916 with the Congress which recognized separate electorates, and the alliance with Congress in Gandhi's non-co-operation movement. The passing of this storm left the Muslims as a whole disillusioned and fearful for their future while leaving a fresh sediment of Muslims on the Congress shore. These included many westernized Muslims who took a secularist view on the lines of Ataturk as to the place of Islam in the state. The most distinguished of these was Muhammad Ali Jinnah of Bombay, who had been a member of Congress for many years and now held the balance of power in the Legislative Assembly as leader of the Independent party.[1]

[1] This was a parliamentary group rather than a party, for it had no country-wide

Muhammad Ali Jinnah

The working of the Montford reforms tended to increase these fears. They were expressed in a rising tempo of communal riots and increasingly bitter exchanges between the party leaders. The Ali brothers swung round from the preaching of Hindu fraternalism to the championship of Muslim rights. But the community remained divided and perplexed. In 1927 the League split on the question of the Simon Commission,[1] uniting in 1929 in the All-India Muslim Conference. Mr. Jinnah retired in 1931. Only in the Panjab were the Muslims active and confident under the determined leadership of Sir Fazl-i Husain, whose icy and resolute character was reminiscent of the Irish Parnell. The constitutional discussions which began with the appointment of the Simon Commission at the end of 1927 increased Muslim fears, for it soon became clear that a further instalment of power would be given to responsible ministers, and that full self-government was now above the horizon of development. Heightened apprehension quickened the urge to unity and also the search for a practical policy. The search for unity led to the reorganization of the League[2] under Mr. Jinnah in 1934, whose emergence from political retirement in this capacity was itself a sign of the times. The search for a positive programme led in two directions. The first was that of safeguards. During the constitutional discussions of the early thirties there was a renewed insistence upon communal representation, not only in the constituencies, but also in the government service. Muslims welcomed federation as giving provinces more freedom and thus tending to safeguard Muslims in their majority areas. They sought to reduce the scope of the Centre as much as possible.[3] The second direction was towards autonomy in the Muslim majority areas. In 1930 Iqbal suggested the union of the Frontier Province, Baluchistan, Sind, and Kashmir as a Muslim state within a federation. This proved to be a creative idea which germinated during the early thirties to burst into vigorous life with the advent of the new reforms. The idealist Choudhri Rahmat Ali developed this conception at Cambridge, where he inspired a group of young Muslims and invented the term Pakistan in 1933.[4] His ideas seemed visionary at the time, but within seven years they had been turned into a practical programme by the future Qaid-i-Azam with the new name as its slogan or banner. The ideology of Iqbal, the visions of Rahmat Ali, and the fears of Muslims were thus united by the practical genius of Jinnah to bind Muslims together as never before during the British period and lead to effect an act of political creation.

organization. But it numbered nearly 30, and when in alliance with the Congress Swaraj party, as it often was, could usually secure a government defeat.

1 The co-operating group was led by Sir Muhammad Shafi.

2 The conference executive met for the last time in 1936.

3 e.g. by allotting the 'residuary powers' of government, and as many defined powers as possible to the Provinces.

4 P for Panjab, A for Afghans (Frontier Province), K for Kashmir, S for Sind; the whole meaning 'Land of the Pure'.

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CHAPTER 6

The 1935 Act and After

THE new Government of India Act received the royal assent on 4 August 1935. It was the last major constructive achievement of the British in India; its significance matched both its bulk and the deliberation of its preparation. The consideration of the next constitutional step had begun ten years earlier with the Muddiman Committee's report; the ill-starred Simon Commission had reached India seven years previously, and its report of 1930 had been anticipated by the Congress counterblast of the Nehru report. The government of India's own proposals of 1930 (containing the first official suggestion for responsibility at the Centre) had been followed by the three sessions of the Round Table Conference. The Lothian report determined the electoral provisions of the Act; the communal award of 4 August 1932, following on abortive communal discussions between the Indian parties themselves, had fixed communal representation in the provinces and this was given final shape by the Poona Pact of 24 September 1932, which secured general as well as special representation for the scheduled or depressed classes at the point of a Gandhian fast unto death. A government white paper of 1933 set out a first draft of the proposals which were finally embodied in the Act with five major alterations after further consideration by a joint select committee of both Houses presided over by Lord Linlithgow. The Bill had been successfully piloted between the Scylla of British hesitancy expressed by the 'die-hard' opposition in Parliament, and the Charybdis of Indian impatience represented by Congress obstruction. As it emerged it probably represented the greatest measure of agreement then possible, if not within India itself, at any rate between current opinion in India and Britain respectively.

The Act continued and extended all the existing features of the Indian constitution. Popular representation, which went back to 1892, dyarchy and ministerial responsibility, which dated from 1921, provincial autonomy, whose chequered history went back to the eighteenth-century presidencies, communal representation, which first received overt recognition in 1909, and the safeguards devised in 1919, were all continued and in most cases extended. But in addition certain new principles were introduced. These were the federal principle, with its corollary of provincial autonomy, and the principle of popular responsible government in the provinces.

Certain administrative changes may first be noted. Sind was separated from Bombay to become a separate province. A new province of Orissa was formed from the Orissa division of the former province of

Bihar and Orissa and adjacent portions of the Madras and Central Provinces. These became governor's provinces along with the North-West Frontier Province, which had been promoted to the same status in 1932. At the same time Burma was separated from India and a separate constitution on lines similar to the Indian provinces enacted for it.[1] British India thus attained its final administrative form of eleven governor's provinces, the Chief Commissionships of Delhi, Ajmer-Merwara, Coorg, and the Andamans, and the agency of British Baluchistan. These changes represented in India concessions to growing provincial self-consciousness rather than any specific plan. The well-marked divisions of Gujarat and Maharashtra continued to be united in the Bombay province and the Tamil, Telugu, and Malayali peoples remained united in Madras. The separation of Burma was the recognition of an historic and cultural independence and the correction of an historical accident.

The most striking innovation was the introduction of the federal principle. Indian federation was conceived as a double process by which autonomy was conferred on previously subordinate provinces on the one hand, and the separate princely states, previously bound collectively only by the consultative Chamber of Princes, and individually by direct ties with the Crown, were to be integrated with the rest of India on the other. Federation in the provinces was a matter of legislative enactment, but since the position of the princes was regulated by separate treaties, their adhesion could only be brought about by consent. Accordingly it was provided that the central portion of the scheme would only come into force when rulers representing half the total princely population had acceded to the federation. The princes were to nominate one-third of the representatives of the Lower Federal Chamber and two-fifths of the Upper, and the powers surrendered by them would in each case be regulated by their respective instruments of accession. Until their accession the old central government would continue to operate.

Though the new central executive depended upon princely accession, the federal principle as such existed independently and was enforced without them. The problem of 'residuary' legislative powers was solved by the preparation of three detailed lists, one federal, one provincial, and one concurrent. The allotment of powers still unforeseen, a cause of difference between Hindu and Muslim opinion, was not confided to either branch of government, but to the discretion of the Governor-General. The division of executive and financial powers followed broadly that of the 1919 Act, the main difference being the allotment to the provinces of a share in the proceeds of income tax. The importance of the concurrent list of legislative subjects became clear when the second World War compelled the central government to undertake a degree of control of national life undreamt of in pre-war

[1] This was re-enacted separately as the Government of Burma Act in the next parliamentary session.

years. The corollary of federation was provincial autonomy. The reality of this departure was also demonstrated by war experience, notably in the crisis of the Bengal famine of 1943. The federal structure was completed by the creation of a federal court for interpretation and the resolution of disputes and a federal reserve bank.[1]

The next great innovation was the introduction of responsible government in the provinces. Dyarchy was swept away, to be replaced by a system of popular governments appointed by the governor but responsible to a popularly elected assembly. Chief ministers or premiers became the effective heads of provincial administration and governors were enjoined to act on their advice so long as their reserved powers were not invaded. Dyarchy, which had been banished from the provinces, reappeared at the Centre, where ministers depending upon popular support controlled the whole administration except defence and foreign affairs. For these subjects the Governor-General would appoint counsellors who were analogous to the nominated 'members' of governors' former executive councils.

Other features of the constitution were not new, but represented large developments from previous practice. The provincial assemblies were recast and second chambers were added in six provinces out of eleven. These popular assemblies were backed by popular electorates, which were expanded on the lines recommended by the Lothian Committee to include about 30 million voters. Though a small property qualification was retained nearly a sixth of the adult population of India became eligible to vote. Women received the franchise on the same terms as men. The principle of communal representation, admitted for the quietening of Muslim tender consciences in 1909, and extended as a concession to human weakness in 1919, was accepted as a regular feature in 1935. Muslims in all provinces, Sikhs in the Panjab, Christians in Madras and elsewhere, and Europeans specially in Bengal were all accorded special representation. But though the principle was now openly admitted, it was not applied as part of a reasoned conception of a plural society. It was a permitted deviation from western homogeneous democratic representation, as the new provinces of Sind and Orissa were deviations in deference to public demand from the old tradition of forming provinces on grounds of administrative convenience or historic accident.

The existence of safeguards and special powers was also a 'carry-over' from the previous practice. At the Centre the Governor-General had the control of the reserved departments, the power of certifying legislation in the form of 'Governor-General's Acts', and the power to issue ordinances with the force of law for six months at a time. The governors were vested with special powers for the discharge of their 'special responsibilities'. The most important of these were the prevention of discrimination, the protection of the legitimate interests of minorities, and the continuance of the administration in the event of a

[1] Set up by the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.

breakdown of the machinery of self-government. In this latter contingency they were given legislative authority both temporary and permanent and the power to control the whole administration. These powers may be described as the provision of a reserve engine in the event of the breakdown of the new constitutional machine or a strike of its new engineers. Other safeguards preserved the rights of the all-India services and their control by the Secretary of State.

The Secretary of State was retained with a number of advisers in place of the India Council. He remained the symbol of the surviving ultimate control of Parliament. The umbilical cord between constitutional parent and child was not yet severed.

This massive constitutional document, with its elaborate instrument of instructions and its complicated schedules marked a major step towards the goal of dominion status. But it was not that dominion status in itself. It may be briefly described as the establishment of provincial autonomy in relation to the centre and self-government with regard to the local administration together with popular participation in the executive as well as the legislative branch of the central government. To this may be added the federal principle and the projected integration of the princes with the rest of India. British control was largely pared away in the provinces where its principal vestiges were the British-appointed governors, with their reserve powers, and the British-controlled services like the I.C.S. and the police, who could be directed but not dismissed. An imperial official could be transferred or even placed on the unemployed list, but not dispensed with or degraded without the Secretary of State's consent; though definitely subordinate they therefore still retained some degree of independence in relation to the provincial executive.

In certain important respects the new constitution fell short of dominion status. The first was the proposed existence of dyarchy at the Centre. In the reserved part of the administration, which controlled foreign affairs and defence, there was still to be found an executive irremovable by the people of India and responsible to the British Parliament. The Viceroy continued to combine the functions of head of state and prime minister, and to be dependent upon the British cabinet. The transition carried out in Canada by Lord Elgin in 1845 by mere convention had in India still to come, and was for the present barred by legal enactment. The second restriction was the existence of safeguards, which as Professor Coupland states, were without any real parallel in the dominions. They might be disregarded or whittled away in practice, or they might be removed by amending legislation, but for the present they were an advertisement of surviving dependence, and a ready handle for the use of critics disposed to doubt the sincerity of British declared intentions. The third was the surviving subordination of the proposed federal legislature to the British Parliament. Not only would it be the creature of a British Act of Parliament, to which body, in fact, all other dominions owed their constitutions, but its legislation

was subject to 'refusal of assent or reservation by the Governor-General, acting under the control of the Secretary of State, and to disallowance by the Crown acting under the Secretary of State's advice'.[1] This, like the other restrictions, could be removed in the course of development without injury to the scheme as a whole, but while it lasted was an impediment to India's aspiration of independence, or serious comparison to the status of the dominions, still basking in the declaratory warmth of the Statute of Westminster.

The pivots of the new constitution were federation with its implication of princely co-operation, responsibility of government to the elected representatives of the people, the communal principle which regulated the form of that representation, and the existence of safeguards. It was around these points that constitutional discussion and political tactics revolved during the twelve remaining years of British rule.

We may here anticipate later developments to some extent by considering the success of the new constitution as a whole. It would be easy to conclude, from the failure of the central federal structure to materialize, and the eventual establishment of the Republic of India, that the new constitution was a failure. But this would be far from the truth. The Act of 1935 formed an organic connecting link between the old and the new. It contained within itself the seeds of independence. The irresponsible elements were no longer the essence of the system; they formed, so to say, no longer the trunk or roots of the political roof tree of India, but branches which could be lopped away without injury to the whole. Or the new elements could be likened to the branches of the *banyan* tree of India, which take root in the ground so that the original stem can be cut away without injury to the tree as a whole. Secondly, the element of continuity, the vitality in development, may be held responsible for the avoidance of violent revolution in India. The leading political party in India was continuously dissatisfied with the constitution and more than once attempted to force development by unconstitutional means. But there was always hope of achieving the end of independence without violence. It was this consideration which restrained the Congress, for all its apparent intransigence, from deliberately violent courses. If it was not the cause of Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence policy, it was an important factor in enabling him to impose that policy on numbers of not always willing followers. The 'rising' of August 1942 and the naval mutiny of 1946 showed that the advocates of violence had been reduced, if not below danger point, at any rate well below the strength needed for successful revolution. The pressure was there, rising and falling with changing circumstances, but it never reached the level of explosion. The Act proved to be adequate not only for the strains of political transition but for the additional stresses of war and a world crisis.

Thirdly, the Act formed a monument to the sincerity of declared

[1] Sir R. Coupland, *Constitutional Problems of India*, vol. i, p. 146.

British intentions. It represented concessions to the national principle from strength, instead, as could be represented in the case of the Montford reforms, through weakness after a world war. The very deliberation of its construction was evidence of firmness of intention. This was not recognized at the time in many quarters, and still less in the fevered months preceding Lord Mountbatten's declaration. But when the fact of independence scattered the mists of suspicion formed by impatience and a sense of frustration, it was seen that new independence was but the conception of 1935 developed and completed. The Act, therefore, played its part, not only in tiding over the transition without resort to violence, but in the restoring of feelings of goodwill between the Indian and British peoples which was so marked a feature of the post-1947 atmosphere. There was no death-bed repentance on the part of the British; the heir found his heritage drawn up and a testament prepared more than twelve years previously. The regard with which the Act has come to be held in responsible quarters was shown by its treatment by the constitution makers of the Indian Republic. Long sections were taken over entire and the shape of the new Constitution as a whole bears the same sort of relationship to the Act of 1935 as the British land settlements in north India to Todar Mal's *bandobast* in the time of the great Akbar. Not a little of this respect was due to the work of clarification and interpretation of the first Chief Justice of India, Sir Maurice Gwyer. Never was flattery of the British in India more sincere than in the imitation of their final constitutional arrangements.

The new Act was not, however, free from defects, and these had their consequence no less than its merits. It depended on the princes for the implementation of its central federal provisions; it did not prevent partition. The provision that not less than one-half of the princes representing half the princely population must accede to the federation before the central sections became operative proved in fact a fatal obstacle. The still slender powers of aristocratic co-operation were too severely strained and the ever latent centrifugal forces were unduly stimulated. The absence of princely co-operation involved the stillbirth of the central federal legislature and executive, and the continuance of its irresponsible predecessor. This in its turn made the control of communal and the conciliation of national forces much more difficult than it might have been.

Partition, if not provoked, was certainly encouraged by another defect in the Act. While provision was made for minority representation by means of communal electorates, and devices such as weightage and second chambers, the theory of sovereignty was that of a homogeneous democratic and national state. Majority decision was the ultimate criterion of all questions, be their nature what they might. There was no recognition in the new political institutions of the fact of plural society in India. The fact that two cultures as well as two religions existed side by side in India (to consider only the two major Indian

societies) was overlooked, and it was assumed that one society would be willing to accept direction from a government based on a majority from a different society. This was in fact a retreat from the British attitude in the nineteenth century, which, for all its paramountcy in the purely political sphere, recognized that there were social and cultural as well as purely religious realms in which the government would interfere at its peril. Cultural non-interference was the complement of political absolutism. The new constitution gave to any majority the power of cultural as well as political dominance over any minority. The suspicion of a similar tendency on the part of the British in the mid-nineteenth century helped to create the atmosphere which made the Mutiny possible; the fear of such dominance by one community over another after 1935 created the atmosphere which made partition inevitable.

The new era opened with new personalities as well as new institutions. Lord Willingdon was succeeded in 1936 by Lord Linlithgow, who united encyclopaedic knowledge with an ambition to implement the whole Act within his term of office. He had toured India as Chairman of the Royal Commission on Agriculture and had presided over the deliberations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee which had considered the draft constitutional proposals. Lord Zetland, who had (as Lord Ronaldshay) inaugurated the Montford reforms in Bengal, succeeded Sir Samuel Hoare as Secretary of State, and Sir Maurice Gwyer, who had played a large part in the drafting of the 1935 Act, became the first Chief Justice of India.

In India itself the Act was received critically but not altogether unhopefully. The Liberals and other 'splinter parties' were prepared to work the reforms as an instalment towards full responsible government. The criticism of the Muslim League was louder, but the Muslims were also ready to give the Act a trial. The Congress condemned the Act as a whole, but hinted that they might be prepared to work the provincial part under protest. There seemed some hope that Hindus and Muslims might work together as at the time of the Lucknow Pact in 1916. The elections to the Central Assembly in 1935 showed that the Congress was the dominant party in Hindu India.

In this atmosphere Lord Linlithgow set to work. Personal representatives were dispatched to major states to discuss terms of accession. These discussions and the collation of their reports lasted until 1939, by which time new events had occurred to alarm the princes and the outbreak of war was about to preoccupy the government. The golden moment passed, and was never to return. To anyone who does not think that the practical extinction of princely India was a consummation to be welcomed, it is difficult not to regard the patience and deliberation displayed in this matter as excessive. Here was pre-eminently a case for striking while the iron was hot, but it was cold indeed before the viceregal hammer began to descend in 1939.

The next step was the holding of provincial elections. These took

place in February 1937, and resulted in striking Congress successes. In five of the eleven provinces they secured clear majorities; in Bombay they could form a ministry with the help of fellow travellers, while in the North-West Frontier Province their 'Red Shirt' Pathan allies under the 'frontier Gandhi' Abdul Ghaffar Khan, secured a majority. The two important exceptions were Bengal and the Panjab. In Bengal a Muslim coalition ministry under Mr. Fazl-ul Huq took office. In the Panjab the Unionist party, re-created by Sir Fazli-Husain on the eve of his death, secured a majority and took office under Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan. This was the only important non-communal party in the country; it represented the rural as opposed to the urban interest, and while dominantly Muslim in composition, it included an important section of Hindu Jats under the forceful Lala Chothu Ram as well as a group of Sikh agriculturists. Under Sir Sikandar and his successor Sir Khizr Hayat Khan it governed the Panjab for nine years.

Immediately a difficulty arose. The Congress leaders asked for assurances from the governors that they would not use their special powers to override ministers 'in regard to their constitutional activities'. The governors could not bind themselves not to exercise powers they were bound by law to use in certain contingencies. But the desire for office amongst the provincial Congress parties was strong, and the difficulty was overcome by an explanatory declaration by the Viceroy. In July Congress ministries were formed in seven provinces and responsible government in the provinces was fairly launched.

The ministries lasted until the outbreak of war just over two years later. With one or two exceptions they proved remarkably stable and they lasted long enough to demonstrate the existence of constructive statesmanship in the Congress ranks. If Mr. C. Rajagopalachari of Madras was the most distinguished figure amongst the Congress premiers, he had worthy colleagues in Pandit G. B. Pant of the United Provinces and Mr. B. G. Kher of Bombay. Order was maintained, communal outbreaks were dealt with, and the administrative machine, after a few initial jolts, continued to function smoothly. The tendency of provincial Congress committees to regard themselves as parallel governments was discouraged. Congressmen began to think constitutionally. Developments such as Gandhi's scheme of 'Basic education' were undertaken, and experiments like that of prohibition were initiated. Relations with the British governors and officials were often surprisingly good, and there was widespread regret on both sides when the experiment came to an end. But this was not the whole of the picture. National politics did not cease because the federal centre had not yet come into being. The Congress was strongly represented in the old Central Assembly[1] and continued to campaign against the irresponsible central executive. Above all it retained its national organization. The principal leaders of Congress did not assume provincial office. Instead they formed the Congress 'High Command' which, through the

[1] Congress held 44 out of 104 elective seats in a House of 144.

medium of the Congress Working Committee or cabinet laid down the main lines of national policy and supervised the work of the provincial ministries. At its command they took office and on its orders they resigned. The provincial ministries suffered no parallel party organizations, but they themselves were subordinate agents of an all-India authority parallel to the central government. Thus both provincial autonomy and provincial responsibility were incomplete in the Congress provinces, since the governments were subject to control by an outside authority in both respects.

The real political issues were debated and decided in the working committee and the annual general sessions of Congress. The principal influence continued to be Mahatma Gandhi though he held no office and had at times not even been a subscribing member of the party. To the peasant Gandhi was Congress and the Congress was Gandhi; the urban intelligentsia valued his world prestige if they did not always relish his doctrines; his colleagues respected his judgement and revered his character, however much they might be irritated by some of his opinions. Next in popular esteem came Pandit Jawarharlal Nehru, the idol of the young westernized classes and of the landless peasants of the United Provinces. A socialist and social reformer, an agnostic and anti-clerical, a nationalist and democrat, his generous ideals and fiery zeal exactly fitted the mood of the emerging westernized classes. His sacrifices for the cause, his patent disinterestedness, and his frankness of speech had already marked him as Gandhi's destined successor. The more conservative wing of the Congress was represented by the able but unspectacular Rajendra Prasad, western Indian big business and militancy by Sardar Vallabhai Patel, the extreme left wing by the rising Bengali, Subash Chandra Bose.

For the present the Congress leaders were content to watch developments. But this watching was by no means passive; three decisions of vital importance were taken in the years 1936–9. The Congress leaders interpreted their leadership as a 'High Command'; the provincial premiers were so many generals of division subject to directions from the Centre. When Dr. Khare in the Central Provinces grew restive he was forthwith replaced, even at the price of a local political schism. Extremists at the Centre were dealt with equally firmly. Mr. Subash Bose was allowed to succeed Pandit Nehru as president at the end of 1937. But when he stood for re-election a year later against the wishes of the Mahatma, he was disciplined as sternly as Dr. Khare. Thirdly, the Congress boldly claimed to be the *de facto* representatives of the Indian people. Other groups might represent different view-points, but only Congress represented India as a whole. From this it followed that in Congress majority provinces the idea of coalition could not be entertained. They were merely temporary devices where the help of fellow travellers was necessary for the formation of a ministry. In particular this doctrine applied to Muslims. Muslim nationalists represented Muslims as Muslims in the Congress, and Congress as a whole

represented Muslims as Indians. Accordingly no separate Muslim representation was necessary and no coalition with the Muslim League could be entertained. Thus the already incipient Muslim reaction was precipitated into positive action, and to this we may now turn our attention.

Muslim opinion in modern India has been compounded of a desire for self-government as passionate as that of the Hindu together with a feeling of separateness from Hinduism as definite as that of the orthodox Brahman from all others. There was in consequence a see-saw of attraction and repulsion for the undoubtedly nationalist but predominantly Hindu Congress. The Muslim desired to share in freedom, but his freedom must be as much from the Hindus as from the British. Thus the mooting of the Morley-Minto reforms produced a demand for communal electorates, 1914 war-time discontents, the Lucknow Pact, and sympathy for post-war Turkey co-operation in the non-co-operation movement of 1920. Experience of the Montford reforms, specially under Fazl-i Husain's leadership in the Panjab, convinced Muslims even more than Hindus that the British were beginning to surrender the substance of power. In proportion as the prospect of British departure brightened, suspicions of Hindu intentions deepened. This helped to account for the falling apart of the two communities after 1922, and underlay the Muslim advocacy of a weak centre in the proposed federation. Sir Muhammad Iqbal proposed a separate federation of Muslim provinces in 1930, and the dreamer Choudhri Rahmat Ali coined the word Pakistan in 1933, along with a scheme regarded as chimerical by most politicians. The Muslims were uneasy but disunited, and when they sought unity in a revived Muslim League, it was under the Bombay ex-Congressman, Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Jinnah fought the 1937 elections on the basis of independent co-operation with the Congress in Hindu majority provinces by means of coalitions. 'There is really no substantial difference between League and the Congress. . . . We shall always be glad to co-operate with Congress in their constructive programme',[1] said the new leader in 1937. The Congress policy of absorption instead of co-operation, particularly in the United Provinces, was a bitter blow to this policy. At a stroke it destroyed hopes of friendly independent co-operation and in a moment revived the simmering Muslim suspicions of Hindu absorptive tendencies. Congress rule now meant for the middle class Muslim Hindu domination. The polished westernized Muslim politician found himself consigned to outer political darkness by his former colleagues; he turned to popular Muslim sentiment for support and found it unexpectedly easy to arouse. By so doing he converted a middle class Muslim nationalist movement into a popular Muslim resurgence, and so laid the political foundation of Pakistan. 'The majority community have clearly shown their hand that Hindustan is for the Hindu', he declared.[2] Reports were compiled of alleged Congress oppression

[1] R. A. Symonds, *The Making of Pakistan*, p. 53. [2] Ibid., 55.

and when the Congress ministries resigned in October 1939, Jinnah declared 'a day of deliverance and thanksgiving, as a mark of relief that the Congress régime had at last ceased to function'. From this attitude it was but a step to the formal adoption of Pakistan as the goal of League endeavour in 1940. The Congress on their part under-estimated the significance of this development. Can a prophet come out of sophisticated Bombay, was their attitude. The League had not done too well in the elections; it did not control the Panjab or Bengal. These rumblings were minimized as the complaints of disgruntled politicans disappointed in their ambitions. But its miscalculation proved to be as great and as grievous as the British dismissal of Gandhi, twenty years before, as a harmless eccentric.

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CHAPTER 7

India and the War, 1939–45

THE outbreak of war in September 1939 found India even more unprepared in a material sense than Britain and with a much more divided mind. Almost the only material sign of preparation had been the visit of Lord Chatfield's mission. The public and officials alike had been absorbed in the unfolding drama of the constitutional experiment. Europe was still far off, and it did not seem, even if war broke out, that India would be very directly affected. Not that the public was unaware or uninterested in European development. Indian nationalists as good democrats were strongly anti-Fascist; they joined in the chorus for strong measures without any great expectation of being called to take part in them. Meanwhile the rise of the Muslim League, the struggle between right and left wings of Congress, and the fate of the provincial ministries were of much more absorbing interest. Amongst the Congress leaders, Jawarharlal Nehru was the only one to be fully aware of the import of international events for India and to seek to interest the public in these issues. In foreign affairs the attitude of mind which was fast disappearing in home politics still lingered, a feeling that it was the business of the paramount power. India could only interest herself when freedom had been won. The old feeling was widespread that Britain's embarrassment might be India's opportunity. No one dreamt that embarrassment might become mortal peril, not only to Britain herself, but to India as well.

When war broke out, therefore, there was a general approval of the cause coupled with a widespread reluctance to do very much about it. It was Britain's affair, not India's. The old slogan of 'no taxation without representation' was translated to read 'no popular war effort without responsible government'. The Congress ministries resigned on the manner of India's participation in the war.[1] Individuals and groups were willing to give help, but India as a whole sat back to watch the mighty drama unfold in the European arena from what was thought to be a secure and comfortable seat in the grandstand. This mood persisted until Dunkirk and the fall of France. A moment of alarm gave place to a feeling of admiration for British doggedness and spirit. When invasion failed it was realized that the war would be a long one and that India would have an important part to play. There was more willingness to assist, but still the divided mind persisted. How could India assist the cause of liberty abroad without first obtaining her freedom at home? The entry of Japan into the war intensified rather

[1] See below.

than modified this mood. There was more awareness of danger and more readiness to help, but also a deepening sense of frustration at India's inability to control her own destiny.

It will now be convenient to touch on the various aspects of war-time India in turn. To the Viceroy fell the task of not only managing a restive public opinion as best he could but of organizing the war of India as a member of the British empire and potentially of the British Commonwealth of Nations. A large programme of military expansion was put in hand. The Middle East was the obvious theatre for Indian troops, and thither forces were dispatched to assist Sir Archibald Wavell in his watching brief in Egypt. The fall of France, with its elimination of French strength in the Middle East and the entry of Italy into the war, transformed this theatre overnight into the most crucial military area outside Britain itself. Indian troops suddenly found themselves at the centre of events. Their courage and skill rose to the occasion. In the famous desert campaign of 1940–1 Indian troops bore a distinguished part. The Fourth and the Seventh Divisions added fresh laurels to Indian arms, and proved themselves masters of the rigours and intricacies of desert warfare. With modern equipment they were second to none in the world. Indian participation lasted through the commands of Wavell and Auchinleck to the final desert campaign of Montgomery. It also included the Iraq, Syrian, and Persian operations. In Iraq Indian intervention was decisive.

Before that time, however, the major Indian military effort had been diverted eastward. From the beginning of 1941 the Japanese menace to South-east Asia had been visibly growing. Along with British and Australians, Indian troops were used to garrison Malaya. When the Japanese stroke fell in December 1941 Indian troops shared in the long retreat to the south and in the disaster of Singapore. In its capitulation 90,000 Indian troops were involved. Indian formations played an honourable part in Alexander's fighting retreat from Burma, and henceforth were concerned with the defence of India itself. Their posts were now the hilly jungles and fever-haunted valleys of the Indo-Burman border down to the rain-drenched tracts of Arakan. In this situation they had two fresh problems of the first magnitude to solve. The first was the exchange of tropical jungle for desert conditions of warfare, and the second the tactics of the Japanese trained to this type of warfare and possessing the mobility which came of frugal habits and light transport. From 1943 the active Indian army passed under Mountbatten's South-East Asia Command (S.E.A.C.) and became a part of Sir William Slim's Fourteenth Army. Their moment of trial and their greatest triumph came with the Japanese invasion of Assam in the spring of 1944. The Seventh Division's stand at Kohima, cut off from all aid, save by air, broke the spearhead of the Japanese advance, and made inevitable the rout which followed. Thenceforward the story was one of increasing success, though always in the most arduous conditions, until the crowning triumph of the

recapture of Rangoon. The Indian army had shown its mettle in the most difficult of all terrains of the war and the most testing of all types of warfare. A Japanese document listed the Gurkhas as the troops most to be feared of all the nationalities opposed to them. When the Japanese war ended in August 1945 Indian troops were poised for the assault on Malaya under the command of Mountbatten. Alongside the army, the Royal Indian Air Force and Navy, both negligible at the outbreak of war, played a distinguished and increasingly significant part.

One of Linlithgow's principal claims to fame was his organization of the Indian war effort. Here the mind of the administrator could range unhampered by personal vagaries and political perplexities. The first question was that of supply and the second that of military expansion. At first it was not thought that India would lie in close proximity to a large-scale campaign, but its vital relationship to the Middle East was early recognized. Before the war Lord Chatfield's committee had recommended a capital outlay of 7 *crores* of rupees (£5,400,000) for expanding Indian ordnance factories, and this, with additions, was at first thought to be sufficient. After the fall of France, however, India was conceived as a centre of a Commonwealth group for the supply of the Middle Eastern theatre. The visit of the supply mission of Sir Alexander Roger in the autumn of 1940 coincided with the holding of the Eastern Group Conference which was attended by representatives, in addition to those of India, from Australia, New Zealand, Ceylon, South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Burma, Malaya, Hong Kong, Palestine, and East Africa. From the conference came the Eastern Group Supply Council, which rationalized the supply of materials from the various territories. India became the principal supplier of cotton textile, jute and jute products, leather products, and wooden furniture. In the first year of the council's work India supplied 60 per cent. of its total demands and later 75 per cent. When Japan and America entered the war the picture changed. Some sources of supply dried up and fresh needs appeared nearer home. Moreover in America there was a reservoir of productive power which could make good deficiencies throughout the Allied world. India developed new needs and at the same time became eligible for Lend-Lease. Early in 1943 the council was wound up, its function of allocating orders being taken over by the British Central Provision Office with a British Ministry of Supply Mission working in collaboration.

But the work of industrial development went on with even greater energy. The expansion of industry was not limited to India's traditional crafts like textiles, but included heavy industry and new industries altogether. Tata's already great steel plant was further extended and this was supplemented by the Bengal Steel Corporation's works at Burnpur and the Kumardhuti group. The cement industry was expanded on a large scale: the Indian deposits of bauxite were exploited to develop the new aluminium industry, and the mica industry, in which India held a monopoly outside Russia and Brazil, was largely increased.

Along with the organization of supply went the rapid growth of the armed forces. The peace-time strength of 175,000 was steadily increased until there was a total of more than 2 millions under arms. Mechanization and motorization went hand in hand with this process with the result that India not only gained an armed forced of unprecedented size, but a large number of technicians of varied skills. The navy, under a British vice-admiral, became an efficient and effective force which played its part both in the Burma campaign and against the Japanese submarine menace. The air force built up a reputation for smartness and efficiency which it carried over into the new era of independence. Though only a relatively small proportion of the military forces were actually engaged in military operations, the displacement of such large numbers from their customary life, and their equipment with new skills, was bound to open up new horizons and to stimulate the spirit of change.

The war in Indian experience had three well-defined stages. The first was the period of 'phoney' war, when life went on much as before. The war was a remote spectacle, a matter for talk and the newspapers. This phase ended for India with the fall of France in June 1940. The old international order seemed to have vanished overnight and the country was for a time bewildered and alarmed. Then followed the Battle of Britain, which was watched with growing admiration; the old order, it seemed, was to survive after all. The second phase was that of organization as a Middle Eastern base. Trade and industry boomed; headquarters swelled and men in khaki appeared;[1] cities grew congested and there was an air of bustle and purpose. But still it was not India's war so much as one to which India was contributing. The third phase opened with the Japanese aggression. From the spring of 1942 India began to suffer some of the perplexities and inconveniences of other belligerents and later met trials of her own. The war cloud spread over the whole country and became part of its daily experience. The herald of this transformation was perhaps the Japanese bombardment of Vizagapatam in April 1942.

The first effect was the appearance of the Americans in Delhi and in the East. To them were added large numbers of British troops concerned no longer with the Middle East but with the Japanese menace in Burma. The immediate consequence was the dislocation of the economic life of the country. Supply lines had to be re-orientated from lines from the interior to the ports to lateral lines from the ports to eastern India. To the strain which this placed upon the railways was added a reduction of shipping services. The Indian railways, already somewhat depleted by shipments to the Middle East, had to carry the whole weight of the war effort as well as the whole burden of the country's economic life. A period of unprecedented strain began which lasted until the end of the war. The mounting expenditure on the local

[1] Military officers at H.Q. were not required to wear uniform at their offices in the afternoons until the arrival of General Auchinleck in Jan. 1941.

war effort, together with large sums spent by both British and Americans in making airfields and in other preparations, set in motion a price-rise from which India had hitherto been largely exempt. Shortages began to appear, and culminated in the Bengal famine of 1943.

It had been thought that famines were things of the past in India. There was the Famine Code, which had worked successfully for sixty years. It was based on the distribution of grain to threatened areas with arrangements for the employment of agriculturists on productive work until the next harvest could restore the countryside. But this assumed the import of foodstuffs from abroad if necessary. The war had now cut off supplies from abroad except from neighbouring Burma. Food was short everywhere. The loss of Burma denied her rice supplies to Bengal and the south. At the same time the price rise tempted peasants to dispose of their reserve stocks at what seemed to them heaven-sent prices. But then rice disappeared from the markets and a decline in indebtedness proved a poor substitute for a lack of sustenance. The overall shortage has been estimated at 5 per cent., but this was aggravated by faults of distribution and control. Extensive black markets developed and famished peasants began to appear in Calcutta. An added difficulty was the absence of rice in the rest of India so that only unpalatable grains and pulses could be offered to starving rice-eating areas. During the summer of 1943 it became apparent that the Bengal administration was unable to cope with the situation. An undue tenderness for the principle of provincial autonomy delayed action by the Centre and it was only on the arrival of Lord Wavell in October 1943 that the nettle was firmly grasped. The British army was entrusted with relief distribution and a system of rationing instituted for all large towns. Never had the British army been so popular. Thenceforth, though shortages continued, no one starved, and a feeling of confidence returned. Food became a central concern.

It is now time to turn to the constitutional problem during the war period. In the summer of 1939 the hesitancy of the princes still delayed the establishment of the federal centre. The Congress watched and waited and Gandhi, more fully persuaded of his pacifism as the war clouds lowered, sent a personal letter to Hitler. On the outbreak of war Lord Linlithgow thus found himself without a responsible ministry to consult, and without a legal option to proclaiming that 'war has broken out between His Majesty and Germany'. He followed this up by addressing both houses of the legislature and by consultations with the national leaders, beginning with Mahatma Gandhi himself. Such action was legal and perhaps inevitable, but it was natural for it to appear provocative to the rapidly growing national consciousness of India, and so in fact it seemed to both League and Congress. The premiers of the non-Congress or League ministries of Bengal, the Panjab, and Sind were backed by their legislatures in pledging support to the war effort and the princes did the same individually. But the

Congress demanded an immediate definition of war aims and an immediate declaration of independence, 'present application to be given to this status to the largest possible extent'. The League made its support dependent on 'justice for Muslims' in Congress provinces and a guarantee of no constitutional advance without League approval. The Viceroy met this situation on 17 October by affirming dominion status to be the goal of constitutional development, action to be taken after the war with due regard to minority opinions. Meanwhile he proposed the formation of an advisory council representing all sections of opinion to associate the Indian public with the prosecution of the war. This was rejected by the Congress High Command as inadequate, and the provincial Congress ministries forthwith resigned. The League was less forthright and indeed commended the stress on minority rights, but demanded the abandonment of the whole federal scheme.

The deadlock thus created lasted throughout the war. It had two aspects. In relation to the British the Congress demanded full responsibility before sharing in the war effort. The British on their side were precluded by constitutional difficulties from agreeing to this and could only offer self-government *de facto* in anticipation of the end of the war. To the British, with the precedent of Canada in mind, this seemed an honest, and, in the circumstances, a common-sense procedure. To the Congress it savoured of Machiavellian delay and dark designs to frustrate legitimate aspirations. The second aspect was the relation of Congress to other parties. The Congress continued its 1937 policy of regarding itself as the sole legitimate representative of the Indian people. This was unacceptable, not only to the government, but also to the League. It encouraged the League to proceed to the formal acceptance of the Pakistan programme in the early months of 1940, and the League's attitude in its turn sustained the British in declining to make a unilateral settlement with the Congress. The three parties to the constitutional struggle thus stultified each other. The deadlock bred a steadily increasing sense of frustration as between British and Congress on the one hand, and a steadily deepening suspicion as between the League and Congress on the other.

The fall of France produced a temporary easing of tension. 'The tone of Congress hostility', in Professor Coupland's words, 'softened.' For a moment it seemed as though the fall of Britain might be the prelude to a Nazi occupation. 'We do not seek our independence', wrote the Mahatma on 1 June, 'out of British ruin.' The Congress High Command threw overboard Gandhi's pacifism. (He had praised Pétain's armistice and had called 'on every Briton to adopt . . . a nobler and a braver way' of surrender to Hitler.) There was talk of a national government and of parallel bodies to organize defence. The reply of the new British war cabinet was the 'August offer'. The offer contained one new point of substance along with the usual provisos of British obligations and minority rights. The post-war constitution was to be drawn up by an Indian constituent assembly whose decisions were

virtually accepted beforehand. Thus Parliament virtually surrendered its right of legislating for India, a right which it had hitherto jealously guarded.

But by August the first panic fears of British collapse had passed. Though the issue in fact was still in the balance it was known that the British would fight to the last, and the evident British resolution inspired a new confidence in their ability. This had the effect, not of warming Congress hearts but of reviving suspicions of real British intentions. Britain, thought many, was still playing with India. There could be no settlement except on the basis of independence now and with Congress alone as representing India.[1] Consciousness of strength joined with revived suspicion to reject the offer. The appeals of the new Secretary of State (Mr. Amery) as well as the Viceroy fell on deaf ears; the deadlock was more complete than ever. The League for its part, newly converted to the Pakistan ideal, insisted that any national government should be on a Hindu-Muslim fifty-fifty basis and pointed the moral of partition. The communal deadlock was as complete as the Indo-British one.

The Congress was thus thrown back on Mr. Gandhi's pacifism and non-co-operation. Mr. Gandhi insisted on preaching pacifism in opposition to the war effort and organizing civil disobedience as a sanction for this right when disputed or denied by the government. The most reluctant and least successful of civil disobedience movements followed. Organized in easy stages from the autumn of 1940, it reached its peak in the following May, when some 14,000 Congressmen were in prison. This bore no comparison with the figure of 1930 and thereafter the numbers steadily fell. The movement had in fact no real popular backing, and was chiefly interesting as an index of what the Mahatma could achieve through personal influence alone. The Viceroy on his side carried out the long-promised expansion of his council to a total of fifteen, of whom eleven were Indians.

The entry of Japan and America into the war and the imminent threat of invasion which followed produced a new situation. The need to break the deadlock was now very urgent, and to the British desire to achieve a settlement was added an evident American interest in Indian freedom. All Congressmen, including Pandit Nehru, had been released on the eve of Pearl Harbour and the stage was set for a further effort. On 11 March 1942 the prime minister announced the dispatch of Sir Stafford Cripps, then Leader of the House of Commons and a member of the war cabinet, on a mission to India with a new and radical offer. The Cripps offer dominated Indian politics for the rest of the war. It first reiterated the intention of His Majesty's government to set up an Indian union which should take its place as a dominion of the Commonwealth as soon as possible after the war, and it then pro-

[1] Mr. Gandhi's words were 'between India as represented by Congress, and England', *News Chronicle*, 14 Aug. 1940, R. Coupland, *Constitutional Report on India*, vol. ii, p. 202.

posed specific steps towards that end. A constituent assembly would be elected by the provincial legislatures acting as an electoral college. This body would then negotiate a treaty with the British government. The future right of secession from the Commonwealth was explicitly stated. The Indian states would be free to join, and in any case their treaty arrangements would be revised to meet the new situation. The only proviso was the right of any province to contract out of the constitution and 'to retain its present constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so desires'. The offer ended with a call for co-operation by the popular parties in a national war-time administration.

The great advance which the Cripps offer marked was its frankness and precision. Gone were the hesitancies and the generalities of the 1939 and 1940 declarations. But there were new features as well. A Constituent Assembly had already been conceded, but it was now made clear that the framing of the new Constitution would be the work of Indians alone. The right of secession was acknowledged. The device of a bilateral treaty for implementing the new Constitution and discharging British obligations (reminiscent of the Irish settlement) was introduced. Finally the provision for provincial contracting out provided a means of reassuring Muslim fears within the orbit of democratic principles.

At one moment it seemed as though a settlement was in sight, but then the Congress leaders insisted that the new government must have immediately the full powers of a dominion cabinet. On this rock the discussions foundered; high hopes had been raised, and their disappointment left the sense of frustration deeper than before. The League watched pensive in the wings and observed the collapse not without signs of sardonic satisfaction.

It is perhaps too early to assess the exact cause of the breakdown. It is certain that Mahatma Gandhi took an unfavourable view and eventually overbore the more generous instincts of Nehru and Rajagopalachari. One consideration was the imminent Japanese threat; was it any use to draw a cheque on a failing bank? But even if invasion did not occur immediately, would not the situation again be critical when military movements again became possible after the monsoon? The British had gone so far under the stress of the Japanese threat that they might go further yet if they continued to survive and the threat persisted. Communal considerations led Hindu minds in the same direction. The offer represented almost but not quite a settlement with Congress on Congress terms. The provision for contracting out represented, for all its democratic colour, a concession to the League and as such was distasteful. Congress still underrated the League's hold over Muslims and was confident that it could smother its agitation if given full power at the Centre. A little waiting might give that full power. The stake of a united India under Hindu control was one worth playing for. So the golden moment passed and with it the last real

chance of establishing a united independent India. The rejection of the offer was the prelude to partition.

This decision was not made without some internal stress, the chief sign of which was the ejection of Rajagopalachari from the Congress party. For the rest Congress was rallied behind the once more ascendant Gandhi. The enigmatic Mahatma refashioned his pacifist principles and non-violent technique to meet the new situation. The presence of the British in India, he declared, was a provocation to the Japanese. He coined the 'Quit India' slogan, and prepared a resolution demanding British abdication on pain of a revived civil disobedience campaign. 'There is no question of one more chance', he said. 'After all, this is open rebellion.' All the signs suggested that events would reach a crisis at the moment the Japanese might be able to move again at the beginning of October. When, therefore, the resolution was passed by the All-India Congress Committee on 7 August, the Viceroy, with the unanimous support of the Executive Council, acted swiftly. The whole working committee was interned at Poona. A serious but short outbreak of violence followed, which cost some 900 lives and caused damage estimated at a million pounds. Though responsibility was disclaimed by the leaders, it is difficult to believe that all of them were unaware of such large scale planning by extremists.

During this period India owed much to the rock-like firmness which the Viceroy combined with his patience. The failure of the rebellion did much to discredit the Congress and the improved military situation did still more. The Congress had not only acted wrongly, they had made a mistake. They had backed the wrong horse. The conviction spread that the British were immovable for the duration of the war, and was reinforced by the Viceroy's firmness in dealing with another Gandhian fast early in 1943. Mounting military success and the vigorous measures of Lord Wavell to deal with the food crisis still further strengthened the government's position. Cautious feelers were put out for breaking the deadlock with the British and abortive conversations held between League and Congress leaders; but the end of the war in Europe found the position apparently unchanged. It was, however, in appearance only. For in the interval the League had greatly strengthened its position. The strength of Muslim separatism was now plain for all to see. Even if the Congress should now accept the Cripps offer in the hope of avoiding partition the League would reject it in the hope of achieving it.

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On the political side the second volume of the *Coupland Report* gives the text of the

revised Congress constitution of 1939 (App. 1) and the Congress Declaration of Fundamental Rights (App. V). GWYER and APPADORAI's *Speeches and Documents* provides useful source material. But the major political documentation is the monumental work edited by NICHOLAS MANSERGH, assisted by E. W. R. LUMBY and P. MOON, *The Transfer of Power 1942–7* (1970–). It has already run to six volumes and there are likely to be three more. The relevant volumes for this period are: vol. I, *The Cripps Mission* (1970); vol. II, *Quit India* (the Congress–Government clash) (1971); vol. III, *Reassertion of Authority* (Sept. 1942–June 1943) (1971); vol. IV, *The Bengal Famine*, etc. (June 1943–Aug. 1944) (1973).

SITARAMAYA's *History of Congress*, and biographies of GANDHI, NEHRU, PATEL, AZAD and JINNAH continue to be important. See also C. A. COOKE, *Life of R. S. Cripps* (1957). Lord Linlithgow has been defended by his son, Lord GLENDEVON, in *Viceroy at Bay* (1971).

CHAPTER 8

Independence and Partition

WHEN the cease-fire sounded in Europe the position of the Indian government seemed stronger than at any time since 1942. It enjoyed the prestige of success and evident strength. The caravan was passing on steadily to victory. But the apparent calm of Indian politics was superficial and deceptive. It was the last manifestation in the British period of the Indian genius for accepting a situation too intractable to be altered, and of biding one's time for a more favourable moment. Beneath the surface the same tensions persisted, and indeed were growing more acute. The Congress was even more suspicious of the British in victory than they had been of them in defeat. Imperfectly aware, in spite of the precedent of 1919, of the exhaustion which cripples even the victorious in total war, Indian leaders could not believe that the British would 'stand and deliver' from the plenitude of power. Were not their expressions of benevolence merely a further example of British hypocrisy, and was not their constant harping on minority rights a subtle device to sabotage the idea of an independent India by encouraging Muslim truculence? In spite of the long succession of League victories in both central and provincial elections, the Congress leaders did not yet believe that there was substance behind the demand for Pakistan. Firmness, they thought, could still secure a united independent India on their own terms. Jinnah and the League leaders, on the other hand, were equally suspicious of Congress intentions. They were also conscious of greatly increased strength. They were not yet irrevocably committed to outright partition, in spite of their public declarations, any more than the Congress itself had been after its declaration of independence in 1928, but they believed that the pressing of their claims was the only way to secure the future of their community. Between Congress suspicion of the British, Muslim suspicion of the Congress, and Congress underestimation of League strength, the path of British statesmanship towards the goal of Indian self-government was bound to be hard and stony.

Lord Wavell had succeeded Lord Linlithgow as Viceroy in the autumn of 1943. Thus far his administration had been conspicuously successful. He had been conciliatory but quite firm towards Congress; he had dealt vigorously with the Bengal famine and had instituted a steadily improving control over the whole food administration; he had presided over a steadily expanding war effort in an atmosphere of growing success; he had kept inflation within bounds; his presence and prestige exuded strength and confidence. He had now to face a

wholly different task. He had first to convince two highly critical bodies of the reality of British sincerity and then to persuade two mutually highly suspicious bodies that co-operation, with its attendant give and take, was both necessary and feasible. Failure meant partition with all its incalculable consequences. It is easy to see, at even this short distance of time, that the dice of fortune was heavily loaded against him. Nevertheless he bent himself manfully to the task.

Wavell's first move was to attempt the formation of a national administration as contemplated in the Cripps proposals (which had never been withdrawn). This would complete the war with Japan (then expected to last another year) and then arrange for the promised Constituent Assembly. Conversations were held in June 1945, but they broke down on the allotment of seats in the Executive Council and the Congress refusal to accept the League's claim to be the sole representatives of Muslim opinion. The sudden ending of the Japanese war in August made the situation more urgent. Wavell now put the controversy over the League's representative claim to the test of a general election, both provincial and central. This occupied the winter of 1945–6 while tension gradually mounted. It now became clear that the League dominated Muslim opinion almost as completely as the Congress dominated Hindu. In the key province of the Panjab, the Unionist party, long infiltrated by League sentiment, almost disappeared, and its rump under Sir Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana could only continue in office with the help of the Congress. The carefully devised weightage system here placed a minority government in power in circumstances of rising passion. A short-lived naval mutiny in February 1946 revealed the narrow margin by which the British continued to maintain order of a kind.

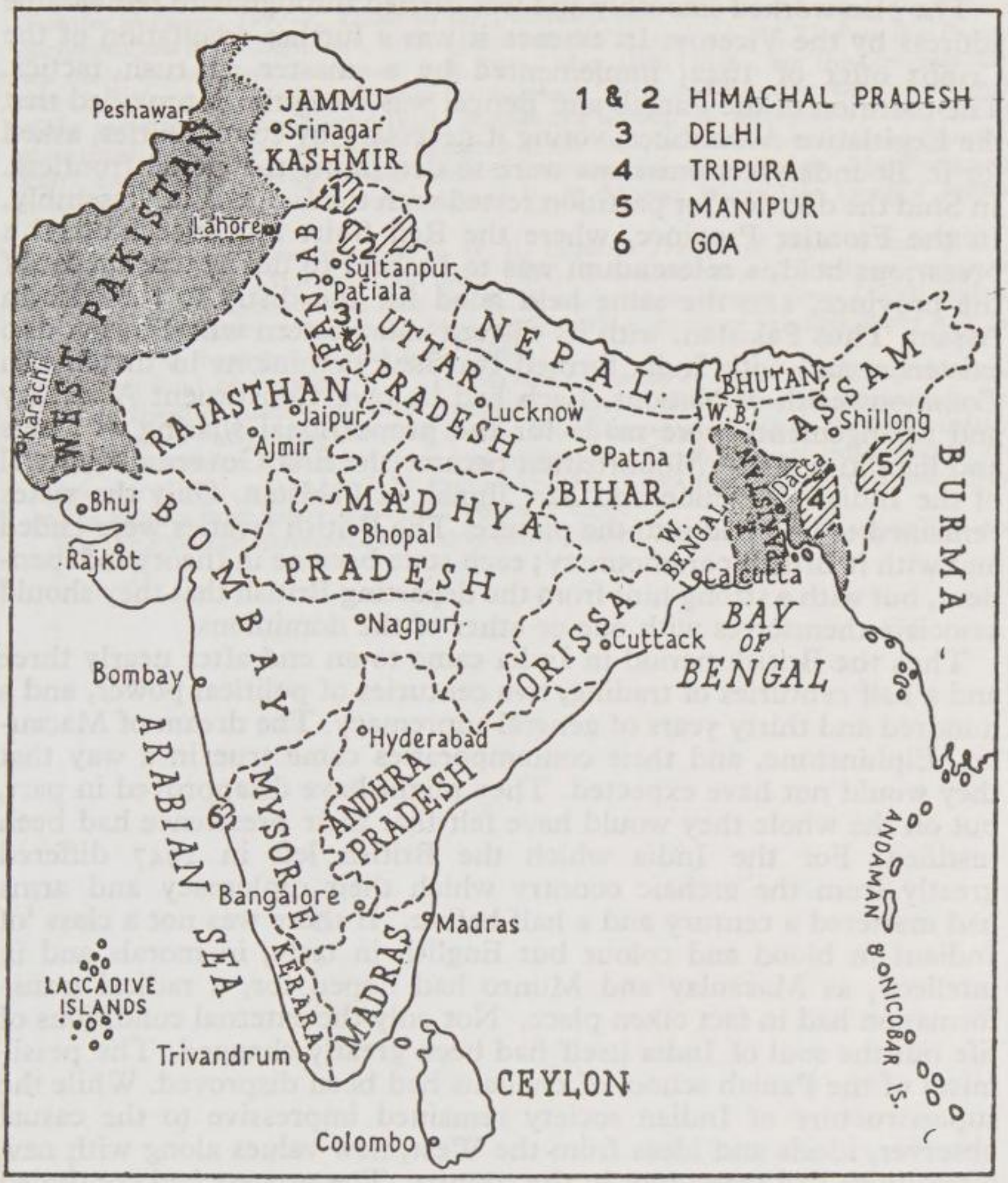
The new British government now intervened directly. A cabinet mission led by Lord Pethwick-Lawrence, now a leading member of the new government, and consisting besides of Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. A. V. (later Viscount) Alexander, visited India in April. After further efforts at mediation between the parties the mission made its own proposals in May. The aim was still to preserve a united India while giving reasonable satisfaction to Muslim claims to autonomy. The method proposed was an ingenious modification of the earlier Cripps offer. There was to be a federal union controlling defence, foreign affairs, and communications, and consisting of the British Indian provinces. The states were to be included after negotiation. There were two new features. The powers of the federal government were reduced (in accordance with Muslim desires) and individual provinces were to be at liberty to form subordinate unions of their own. Each of these was to decide for itself the powers it would exercise outside the range of the federal subjects. On this basis a constituent assembly would be convened representing all parties, and once more it was proposed to form an interim national government. This was Pakistan *in parvo* and seemed to open an avenue for the reconciliation of a united India with Muslim autonomy.

For a moment there was a gleam of hope, for both sides accepted the plan as a basis for action. But breakdown once more occurred over the communal allotment of seats. The Congress insisted on appointing a Muslim to one of their five seats and thus reducing League representation to four; the League insisted on parity and refused to work with nationalist Muslims whom they regarded as traitors to their cause. When the Congress refused to proceed the League offered to take office alone and resented the Viceroy's refusal to proceed with one party only. When, a few weeks later, the Congress repented and the Viceroy admitted their leaders to office with Nehru as Vice-President of the Council, the League denounced the action as a breach of faith and proclaimed a 'direct action day' on 16 August. The tension could no longer be restrained within peaceful bounds, and to the bloody August riots in Calcutta (where Hindus were the sufferers) was added the communal outbreak in Bihar (where Muslims were the victims). There were also outbreaks in East Bengal and the United Provinces. The hope of a united independent India was extinguished in the blood and monsoon passion of 1946. Partition was now the only possible solution, though it took another nine months to convince all parties of the fact.

These months were passed in strain and mounting misery. In October 1946 the League joined the Executive Council. But it was soon seen that they had come to curse and not to bless. Pandit Nehru found himself in real danger when he visited the north-west in the same month; it became obvious that the Frontier would not stand for Hindu rule, Red Shirts, and the Frontier Gandhi notwithstanding. The Constituent Assembly met in December only to be boycotted by the League. Early in the new year there followed the fall of the Khizr ministry in the Panjab to the accompaniment of fighting which destroyed Amritsar and Multan. Section 93 rule and suppressed civil war succeeded the feeble directives of a minority ministry. Something had to be done and done quickly.

Once more the British cabinet directly intervened. Pandit Nehru, Mr. Jinnah (now the *Qaid-i-Azam* or great leader), and Sardar Baldev Singh (a Sikh leader) were called to London for discussions, but these were as fruitless as before. In a last effort to dissipate suspicion it was announced on 20 February 1947 that June 1948 had been determined as the date of the withdrawal of British power. At the same time Lord Wavell was recalled in favour of Lord Mountbatten, who was charged with the preparation of a procedural plan. But neither the persuasions of London, nor the shock of an imminent political vacuum, nor the stimulus of a new personality could now break the Congress-League deadlock. Mr. Jinnah saw victory in sight. 'The Muslim League will not yield an inch in its demand for Pakistan', he said. He had so cast Congress tactics back upon itself that it was that body itself which now began to see in partition the only alternative to prolonged civil war and fearful destruction of human life. In May they themselves proposed the partition of the Panjab as the only alternative to civil war.

Lord Mountbatten soon convinced himself that Pakistan was now the only alternative to anarchy. A visit home secured the consent of the cabinet for this plan. On 3 June he announced the British govern-



THE INDIAN UNION

ment's acceptance of the principles of partition, a procedural plan for carrying it through, and an acceleration of the date of British withdrawal to 14 August. The plan was accepted on the same day by Congress, League, and Sikhs. Each party professed dissatisfaction but each believed that they would gain nothing further by fighting. The Sikhs were the least satisfied, and a powerful section determined to fight in

any case, but they were the weakest party of the three and suffered from divisions and poor leadership. The least common denominator of Indian power politics had at last been discovered.

The plan worked smoothly and was carried through with remarkable address by the Viceroy. In essence it was a further adaptation of the Cripps offer of 1942, implemented by a master of rush tactics. The partition of the Panjab and Bengal was recognized, provided that the Legislative Assemblies, voting if necessary by communities, asked for it. Boundary commissions were to determine the actual frontiers. In Sind the decision for partition rested with the Legislative Assembly. In the Frontier Province, where the Red Shirt ministry retained a precarious hold, a referendum was to be held to decide the future of the province, and the same held good for the district of Sylhet in Assam. Thus Pakistan, with its eastern and western wings, came into existence, and with India formed two new dominions in the British Commonwealth of Nations. Each had its own Constituent Assembly and arrangements were made for the proportional sharing of assets and liabilities. Lord Mountbatten became the first Governor-General of the Indian dominion and Mr. Jinnah of Pakistan. Only the states remained to be fitted into the picture. The British treaties were ended and with it British paramountcy; each state became in theory independent, but with a strong hint from the departing British that they should associate themselves with one or other of the dominions.

Thus the British period in India came to an end after nearly three and a half centuries of trading, two centuries of political power, and a hundred and thirty years of general supremacy. The dream of Macaulay, Elphinstone, and their contemporaries came true in a way that they would not have expected. They might have disapproved in part, but on the whole they would have felt that their prescience had been justified. For the India which the British left in 1947 differed greatly from the archaic country which their diplomacy and arms had mastered a century and a half before. If there was not a class 'of Indians in blood and colour but English in taste, in morals and in intellect', as Macaulay and Munro had hoped for, a radical transformation had in fact taken place. Not only the external conditions of life but the soul of India itself had been greatly changed. The pessimism of the Panjab school of civilians had been disproved. While the superstructure of Indian society remained impressive to the casual observer, ideals and ideas from the West, new values along with new institutions had taken root in the country. The process had continued with gathering force beneath nostalgic cultural archaism fostered by growing national sentiment. The very weapons and arguments used by Congress against the British were largely of western provenance. India broke her British fetters with western hammers. And it was significant of the community of ideas between the two sides that the fetters were never in fact broken by force, but began to be removed by one side as soon as they began to be rattled by the other.

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For the Pakistan movement see works listed under Chapter 5, *The Genesis of Pakistan*.

CHAPTER 9

Economic and Cultural Development

THE last quarter of a century of the British period was a time of rapid development in all departments of Indian life. Everywhere people were looking to the new India that was to be. But the new India which forward-looking patriots envisaged differed widely from the India to which their predecessors fifty years before had looked back. Less and less did people seek to revise the glories of the past, more and more did they strive to rival the triumphs of the contemporary West. Old India was not to be abandoned it is true; but increasingly it was coming to be regarded as a gracious background to the hard competitive world in which the new generation was determined to play an equal and worthy part. It was to provide a sunset glow, as it were, in whose light the hard outlines of the western factory would be softened. It would supply an emotional warmth for the people committed increasingly to new ways of life and thought. The new India was not to be built up, as late nineteenth-century patriots had thought, by copious draughts from the past, but rather by frequent injections from the energetic, contemporary West.

These two tendencies had been present in India from the days of Ram Mohan Roy, and often coexisted within the same individuals. In the latter years of the British period the two streams continued to run side by side, and not always to be obviously in conflict, but the western current was palpably gaining. The extent of its progress was to some extent concealed by nationalist sentiment, which naturally wished to glorify the national heritage, and felt too open a homage to western ideas to be damaging to its sense of self-respect. Nevertheless, the tendency was there, waiting for its strength to be revealed when the withdrawal of the foreign ruling power would no longer make open modernism seem unpatriotic. The influence of the two tendencies can be traced across the various facets of the national life.

From the close of the first World War there was rapid economic development. The suspension of the cotton excise in 1924 and its abolition in 1925 was the symbolic closing of the age of economic dependence. The new principle of fiscal autonomy, as interpreted by the Tariff Board, proved to be no cynical playing with words, but a living reality. The Tariff Board set itself to safeguard existing industries and to foster new ones. Thus the new steel industry received protection which enabled it to weather the depression of the early thirties, and the cotton industry was saved from the competition of cheap Japanese textiles. The sugar industry received help which

enabled India, before the second World War, to become independent of foreign sources of supply, and the cement industry began its career. The war intensified this already considerable economic activity. The Indian jute, steel, cotton, and leather industries expanded rapidly. Cement manufacture became a major industry. The Indian deposits of bauxite were exploited to develop a new aluminium industry and engineering developed from a jobbing basis to an industrial level. Numbers of technicians were trained as part of the war-time military and industrial expansion. In all directions India was seeking to make goods which she had formerly received from abroad. India became the sixth in order of world industrial states, and possessed in Tata's the largest single steel plant in the world.

All this was pure westernism, and it was natural that in this sphere such influence should be strong. But the old India was not yet extinct even industrially. It had its champion in Mahatma Gandhi himself, with his advocacy of *khaddar* or handwoven and homespun cloth. He directed the All-India Khaddar Association and resolutely opposed machines as the engines of Satan. His policy was based on considerations of the moral welfare of the peasants rather than on economic grounds, and on this basis there was much to be said for it. But even his authority could not induce the mass of Congressmen to take seriously the Congress rule of membership of spinning 9 yards of yarn a day. His fight was patently a losing one and even he had to make concessions to the evil thing. He submitted to the surgical operations of western medicine, he travelled on western railways, he consorted with great Indian industrialists like Birla, and did not hesitate to take somewhat of their profits for the benefit of the party funds. The homespun programme was a patriotic and moral but pre-industrial gesture; with independence it receded to the background of national life like village handicrafts in Britain. Industrialism had clearly come to stay.

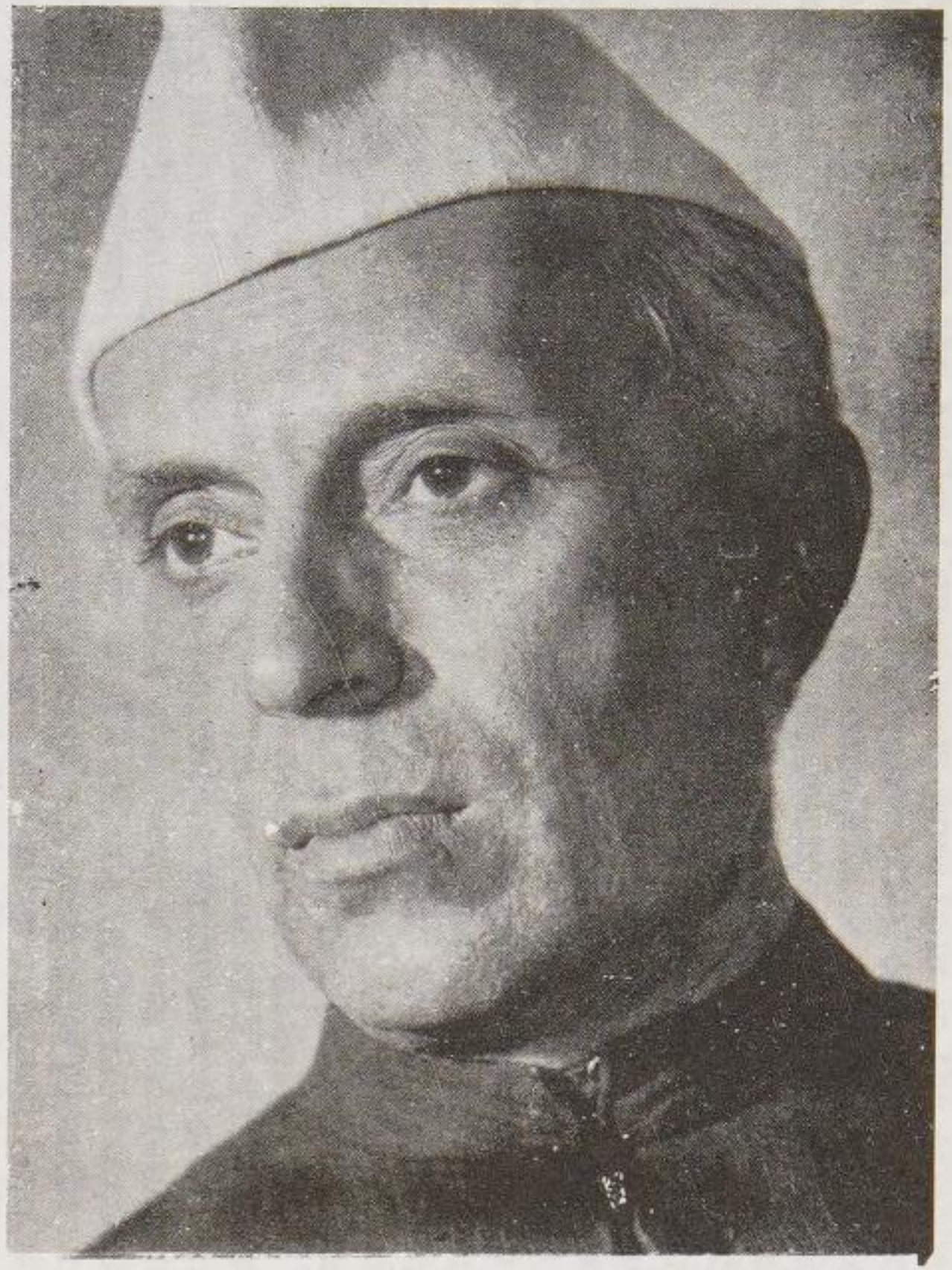
In social life the same dualism can be observed. But here the Mahatma was a revolutionary instead of a conservative force. He headed the movement for the uplift of the depressed or exterior castes with even more zeal than that for *khaddar* cloth. He not only insisted on their inclusion within the Hindu fold and risked his fast to death in 1932 for its sake, but affirmed their equal status as human beings with all other Hindus. His campaigns for the abolition of untouchability, for free temple entry and admission to wells, were founded upon this belief. He coined the word *Harijan* (son of God) to describe them in emphasis of this conviction and renamed the paper in which he expounded his views in their honour. Gandhi was not alone in this work. Christian missions and devoted Hindus like Gokhale's Servants of India had preceded him, but his advocacy with his genius for popular appeal raised the whole question to a national level. In Dr. Ambedkar the Harijans found a leader of outstanding courage and ability from among their own number. The way was prepared for the formal abolition of untouchability in the new Constitution. There were other influences

working in the same direction. The Sarda Act of 1929 raising the marriage age was a signpost of reformist sentiment, though it was only spasmodically enforced. The rights of women were championed with a new vigour. Female education was pressed forward and the Hindu code on the subject of women's rights itself altered. Educated women were still but a very small minority but they had already produced such striking figures as Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the poetess of Congress politicians, and Begam Liaquat Ali Khan. Within the Hindu home there was mitigation of the austere lot of the Hindu widow, and behind the *purdah* Muslim women began to stir. The movement received a strong impulse from the civil disobedience movement of 1930–1 when women played a prominent part in political activity. Caste associations were cautiously relaxing the stricter caste rules and simplifying ceremonies, and a general sentiment was growing in favour of freer social intercourse between all sections of society.

Hardly any of these tendencies were based on a study of the *Shastras*. Rather, they were derived from ideas of individualism and personal worth, of moral rights and duties coming from the West. One could not for generations claim democratic political rights with its corollary of personal equality without eventually becoming aware of its social implications. The ideological skin of traditional Hinduism (or Brahmanism) which had covered Hindu society so long, was wearing thin amongst the westernized and forward-looking section of the people. Over village life it still stretched firm and largely intact. But while rural India forms the weight of Indian society, it is weight in the form of ballast. In the long run, and provided the run is long enough, it will follow the leaders in the towns. All this did not go unchallenged. The Mahasabha sought to organize the orthodox elements politically and the *Sanatan Dharma* stood staunchly for traditional views. But the orthodox found no successor to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya of equal distinction. To the majority of Hindus Hinduism meant Gandhi, and Gandhi was anathema to the really orthodox. The pressure of the West was felt even in avowedly Hindu bodies. Thus the reformist Arya Samaj, whose slogan was 'back to the Vedas' and whose effort was to revive the primitive Hindu institutions and along with them the Vedic way of life, found itself compelled to maintain modern educational institutions conforming to government regulations alongside its *ashrams* and *gurukuls*.

In education there was rapid development. This was most noticeable at the top, but there were increasing efforts to spread popular primary instruction. The first province to make notable progress at the elementary level was the Panjab under the impetus of Sir Fazl-i-Husain. The movement culminated in the government Sargent plan which was paralleled by the Congress Wardha scheme. It is interesting to note that the differences between them were of method rather than objective. The purpose of both was the democratic concept of education for all, not the Brahman principle of education for some. In the sphere of

a. Sarojini Naidu



b. Jawarharlal Nehru

PLATE I4

higher education the Sadler Commission bore fruit in the establishment of a number of unitary teaching universities, of which Lucknow in the north, Patna in the east, and Annamalai in the south were typical examples. The latter exemplified the fact that modern higher education was now sufficiently firmly rooted in the public mind to become the object of munificent private benefaction. Delhi, in the hands of Sir Maurice Gwyer, provided a further type of a teaching university composed of federated colleges. Along with new universities went the rapid growth of technical institutions and the development of scientific study at the highest level. The work of Sir Jagadish Bose in Calcutta, and of Dr. C. V. Raman in the Bangalore Institute, were highlights of a body of scientific endeavour which placed India in the main stream of world scientific study. In many spheres names began to appear beside that of Tagore in the world arena of knowledge and thought, such as Sir Muhammad Iqbal the Panjabi poet and thinker, Sir Jadunath Sarkar the historian, and Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan the philosopher.

The intellectual climate of the twenties was one of liberal humanitarian rationalism. Tilak's attempt to combine Brahmanical orthodoxy with revolutionary nationalism died with him; it was the rationalist humanitarianism of his Brahman rival Gokhale which held the field. The most characteristic representatives of this current of thought were perhaps Mr. C. R. Rajagopalachari and the silver-tongued Srinivasa Sastri in the south, and Pandit Motilal Nehru in the north. Mr. Jinnah, in his days of westernized elegance before 1935, represented the same trend amongst Muslims. Pandit Motilal's son Jawarharlal followed the western mode of using liberalism as a stepping-stone to socialism. For a time in the thirties he dallied with Marxism. Few went so far as this before the late thirties. But then a small group, appalled by the contrasts between poverty and wealth to be seen everywhere, repelled by the Congress patronage of bankers and industrialists, and frustrated of any hope of improvement through normal channels, went beyond Nehru and avowedly espoused the Marxist cause. Many of them were 'England returned' and derived their inspiration from the contemporary Communist trend among British intellectuals.

These currents were western inspired, but they did not altogether go unchallenged. With singular grace and subtlety Shri Arabindo Ghose from his retreat in Pondicherry sought to reinterpret Vedantic thought in modern terms. Sir Muhammad Iqbal equally sought to find in Islam a dynamic for Muslims in the modern world. These were perhaps the two greatest thinkers of the time. Mahatma Gandhi himself tirelessly preached *ahimsa* and insisted that his proposed moral revolution was essentially Hindu. But even Gandhi's *ahimsa* owed much to Tolstoy, himself a link in the long chain of Christian pacifism, while Iqbal's dynamism was not unrelated to western revolutionary influences. Try as these Indian thinkers would, the West kept breaking in. Time may elevate Ghose to a pedestal as the founder of neo-Hinduism, but may also reveal him, like Porphyry among the

neo-Platonists, as the last great champion of a dying school. Be this as it may, it is certain that the western stream was stronger than the eastern during this period, and appeared to be gathering force.

The Indian revival of the visual and aural arts had lagged behind developments in other fields. But now there were increasing signs of vitality. The inspiration was largely traditional, but even here the influence of the West was felt. Art was secular and naturalist in outlook even though its subjects were often religious in form, the artists a professional *élite* rather than hereditary craftsmen. Sculpture was again practised in a secular *milieu*. Music was cultivated and found a western interpreter in Fox-Strangeways. But musical development, specially in Bengal, looked westward and attempted combination of eastern and western modes. The most striking development was in painting. The efforts of Havell, Rothenstein, and Coomaraswamy led to a new appreciation of the treasures of Indian art and sculpture, and bore fruit in the modern school of Indian painting. Much pleasing work of merit was produced, and by Abanindranath Tagore, the doyen of the school, work of great distinction. Here, too, however, the modifying influences were western. While the Bengal school looked back to Ajanta for inspiration and the Lahore school turned toward the Mughuls, Bombay sought to practise a western realism. On the whole the early promise was scarcely fulfilled; Indian artists await a fresh creative vision which perhaps independence will give.

Literary activity beginning in Bengal had long been great and had received world recognition in the award of the Nobel Prize to Tagore in 1912. Other Indian languages took up the tale and between the wars there was an increasing number of essayists and novelists practising in English as well. The writing of such men as Dhan Gopal Mukerji, Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, and Ahmed Ali was supple and vital. They were much exercised by social problems and their work tended to realism; their writings formed a new vehicle for the discussion of ideas formerly provided mainly by the periodical press. Their work promises greater things in the future, but meanwhile it can be said that they have taken over from British writers like E. M. Forster and Edward Thompson the task of interpreting modern India to itself and the world. The cultural keynotes of this period were autonomy and western influence. Gone were the days of imitation or uncritical admiration. In every branch of activity India was standing on her own feet and making her own decisions. She was increasingly ready to face the West on its own terms, to learn, to absorb, and to teach in her turn. In the realms of the spirit as well as in that of politics India was preparing to shape her own future. And whatever form that future might take, it would certainly contain a large element of the West. It is at least arguable that in dying politically the West in India bade fair to triumph spiritually.

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BOOK V

Independent India, 1947–75

INTRODUCTION

THIS essay is an attempt to bring *The Oxford History of Modern India* up to date within a reasonable compass. Nearly thirty years, the usual reckoning of a generation, have passed since its closing date of 1947. If something is not done now, the book will do less than justice to modern India. An exercise in the now popular art of contemporary history seems called for.

Yet there are difficulties. What exactly is meant by the term 'contemporary history'? One answer would be to describe it as what comes within the memory and experience of people from about the age of fifty and under; another that which is beyond the scope of full documentation through the opening of archives, writing of memoirs, etc. Such history can never be regarded as more than a first draft of the full story. There are qualifications and ragged edges to both these concepts. The first, while enlivening with its personal memories, is limited by the memories which are missing and the balance which comes from an overall view. The second, while lacking finality and the proportion which comes from historical perspective, is yet necessary if the attempt to understand the current situation and present trends is not to be abandoned, turning history into an assortment of might-have-beens. We must try to understand the immediate past by whatever means are available, recognizing that the assessment or view is necessarily a tentative or provisional one, subject to change in the light of fuller knowledge and wider perspectives. Time waits for no man and therefore he who runs must also read. A striking example of the heights to which contemporary historical writing can rise and also of the limitations of the whole concept, is the series of annual surveys of international affairs produced by the late Arnold Toynbee in the years between the First and Second World Wars. Expertise, mastery of the known facts, clear presentation and perceptive insight could hardly go further. Yet these volumes do not form a complete history of the period. Much was unknown to the writer at the time of composition; perspectives were to change as the time-span lengthened, like the changing views from a mountain as the climber ascends its slopes; creative but obscure developments could not be perceived. The survey of the years 1947–75 which follows is therefore to be regarded in this light; it is factual in its presentation and provisional in its judgements.

This does not mean, however, that one is precluded from making distinctions, analyses and assessments; it means that all such things are provisional and liable to revision. One's first impression of a film or a play on leaving the theatre may vary considerably from one's final considered opinion; and so it is with the handling of contemporary events. Let us therefore examine the available material as factually and critically as possible, conscious that further knowledge and wider perspectives may later modify our conclusions.

Enough time has now elapsed for some broad distinctions to be made, even though final judgement belongs to posterity. Apart from the rise and fall of individuals, the emergence of problems and their attempted solutions, the growth of crises with their stress and drama, a certain rhythm in Indian affairs since 1947 can be detected. Before 1947 there was a rhythm of Congress and national feeling, rising to a periodical climax and then resolving for a time into a temporary accommodation. The tide flowed and ebbed, each time rising a little higher. Since independence the rhythms have been different but no less clear. Twice in succession one can detect an initial period of crisis followed by a period of planning, creative activity and hope until this in turn gave way to perplexity in the face of fresh problems. In the first case the period of crisis lasted until about 1950, ending with the challenge and eclipse of the late Purshottamdas Tandon (1951). The next period may be said to open with Nehru's creation of the Planning Commission in the same year and was characterized by hope for the future and systematic planning to bring that future into being. The second shaded off imperceptibly into the third phase of perplexity. Things had not gone quite as had been hoped; what was to be done next? A convenient occasion with which to mark this change was the Hungarian and Suez crises of 1956, provided that these are regarded as convenient indicators rather than as boundary marks between one era and the next. Perplexity and a feeling of frustration ran into crises again with the China war of 1962, the death of Jawaharlal Nehru in 1964, the Pakistan war of 1965 and the subsequent death of Lal Bahadur Shastri. Thereafter, with the elections of 1967 there was a return of planning and hope, which at home lead to a peak with the revolt of East Pakistan and its secession from Pakistan after Indian intervention as the new state of Bangladesh.

These are mainly internal rhythms but in the foreign sphere something of the same kind also occurred. After the crisis of independence there was the hopeful involvement of India with western Europe and the Third World. This faded into perplexity when the advent of the hydrogen bomb made the prospect of total war too lethal to be contemplated so that pacts to prevent it or survive it became irrelevant. It deepened into crisis with the China incident until India emerged triumphant from the last round of Pakistani conflict in 1971.

Beneath these rhythms, which after all were surface ones and otherwise would not be detectable by the day-to-day contemporary historian, lay

deeper currents, stirring the whole body-social. Their exact nature we can still only conjecture as also their precise effects; but we can have some idea of their potential for the future. Like a train passing through the countryside in the night, one knows that it is a train, but not its speed, the number of its coaches or its complement of passengers. But though one does not know for certain, from its direction and the size of the train one can guess at its destination. One of these currents is the physical and environmental factor of population growth. For some years this has outstripped increases in production so that the individual *per capita* income has been falling instead of rising, despite the steady increase of the Gross National Product. In 1941 the Census gave a population for all India of 387 millions, of which the Muslims were Mr. Jinnah's 'hundred millions' or a quarter of the whole. But in the mid-sixties, after Pakistan had been lopped off, the Indian total was approaching 500 millions, and now it is said to be around 600 millions. In other words, the population has roughly doubled in about thirty years. What will happen if it doubles again in the next thirty years? Here is a problem of the gravest import.

Then there is the question of language. The Congress adopted Hindi as its language, but this was never wholeheartedly accepted, specially in the south. The Bengalis, through the medium of Rabindranath Tagore and others, made Bengali into a world-recognized language by the time of the first World War. Tamil claims an ancestry only next to Sanskrit in age and distinction; and Tamil is a living language while Sanskrit is not. And Sikhs and Panjabis will speak Panjabi and write in Gurmukhi whatever the Centre may think or do. These languages and scripts no-one will give up, and they increasingly tend to express the ideas and still more the feelings of oneness among the peoples of particular areas. Here we have in incipient form a collection of nationalisms to be set, and one hopes, harmonized within the setting of an all-India internationalism.

There are, simmering and from time to time emerging, movements of renewal from within the Indian social and cultural body. One of these has been the development of the 'vernaculars' into literary and scientific instruments of everyday use, and the demand for education in the local language media. Bengali was in the van of this movement. Bengal also leads with its school of painting based on ancient Indian models and fathered by Abanindranath Tagore. It is not often that two separate artistic movements are inspired by two members of the same family. In the realm of the mind there were the philosophical studies of Drs Radhakrishnan and Das Gupta, while in the sphere of original thought Sri Aurobindo with the neo-Vedantism of his *Life Divine* was a shining star. In the moral and spiritual realm there were the early movements of the Arya Samaj (founded in 1875) and Swami Vivekananda's Ramakrishna Mission and many local initiatives like that of the Guru of Dyal Bagh, Sri Maharshi of Ernakulam and Sai Baba. More recently there has been a revival of Bengali Vaishnavism in the Hare Krishna movement.

In the overlapping moral and religious areas all was dwarfed for a time

by the giant figure of Mahatma Gandhi. The doctrines of *ahimsa* and *satya*, the practice of *satyagraha* and *bhoodan*, swept through the country in the inter-war years and their proponent was freely accorded divine status. Gandhi died, with 'Ram Ram' on his lips, a disappointed man, but if his political and social ideas have never been successfully translated into practical measures, his doctrinal torch was carried by Acharya Vinoba Bhave. This torch may now seem to be burning low, but who can say what may not ignite from its sparks in the future? In all these ways India has been stirring internally, but with what import or potential for the future it is very difficult to assess at this moment in time. In politics there has been the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra party attempting to relate the practice of power and the organization of society to traditional Hindu social values.

But India does not live for herself alone. The modern 'western world' in its forms of liberal capitalism and communism, presses her increasingly and infiltrates her society ever more subtly. This process does not require the actual physical presence of foreigners, although they may be useful as 'carriers'. It depends on ideas and fashions; ideas jump race barriers without hesitation, while fashions can be conveyed by picture, print and the spoken word, as well as by corporeal presence. This confrontation did not end with independence; it in fact intensified. At one time the West thought in terms of a 'takeover' of Indian society; while segments of Indian opinion thought in terms of a rejection of the West. Neither of these attitudes prevailed: instead, there has been a long process of give and take of which the end cannot be foreseen. All we know for certain is that the process continues while we wistfully hope that 'the best is yet to be'. On the Western side there was the political takeover, followed by the cultural aggression of the Anglicists, the Utilitarians and the missionaries.

The first important attempt to absorb and integrate western ideas and innovations was that of Raja Ram Mohan Roy—and very successful it was within its limits. Another was the Servants of India Society of G. K. Gokhale and his friends, an Indian adaptation of missionary and specially Jesuit ideals and practice. But for the most part the process has continued from that day to this without either total rejection or surrender, or any major attempt at synthesis. There have been a series of adaptations to changing circumstances, which carry with them implicit confrontations. Only a few like the Mahatma have had the courage to advocate almost total rejection of the West, and only a few like the Young Bengal movement of the eighteen-thirties, some Christian Calcutta and Bombay circles at the end of the same century, to urge its total acceptance. Western technology, with its sharpening of the tools of production and consequent greater volume of goods and lower prices, ushered in, for the middle and upper classes, a consumer society where wants are multiplied to sustain production and the good life is seen more and more in terms of personal pleasure and social amenity. Here is a direct clash with the ancient ideal of reducing your wants to the level of the satisfactions avail-

able—the ideal of 'piety and endurance and devotion' as Romesh Chandra Dutt expressed it. This is the 'materialism of the West' which sincere puritans, along with those left outside the new pleasure halls, deplore. Technology itself, which has historically flooded in from the West but, in so far as it depends upon knowledge of universal laws, is above the limitations of geography or race, while related to the previous consideration, is a problem in itself. Everyone, even a Gandhi, recognizes the value of a technology in medicine which saves lives that could not be saved before. And everyone, even western politicians, recognize the infernal nature and the lethal threat of atom bomb manufacture. But where is the limit, where is the 'thus far and no further' line of development to be set? As conceived by Gandhiji, or the late Arnold Toynbee or the American Pentagon?

Then there is the clash of ideas and values. The Englishman's cherished pragmatism was set its bounds once and for all by the dictum 'man shall not live by bread alone'. But no more can he live by ideas alone. The West has presented to India ideas of individualism and equality which in fact conflict with the Indian hierarchic structure of society and reverence for authority looking to a divine source. The West's other half, as Toynbee might say, accepts an authority but turns it upside down by making it man-inspired and controlled. It believes in man's welfare but turns it inside out as material well-being for existence bound by physical life instead of a way of escape by self-discipline or *yoga* to the *moksha* or liberation in the hereafter. Perhaps the only recent distinguished person who fully accepted western individualism and rationalism was Jawaharlal Nehru himself; for most there has been a jumble of contrasting ideas in the mind whose contradictory nature was not realized or only partially realized by fits and starts. Only for the sensitive few has there been what might be called a war in the soul. But it is not only the idea of individualism which is in question. There are those of moral duty for the individual and in his relation toward society, of the relationship of groups with one another, of the authority of the State and its relationship to all. It is no use saying that traditional ideas are 'old-fashioned'—and will soon be forgotten. However divided or ignored they may be by the fashionable, they represent deep-rooted forces which influence even those who scorn them. Russia today is still influenced by patterns woven by the long-forgotten Byzantine empire (through the Orthodox Greek church and transmitted through the principality of Kiev). Many Indian traditional patterns are older than these and not less potent. Here then are a series of opposites which must either overcome one another or be reconciled in a larger synthesis.

Apart from the realms of the mind and the conscience, of traditional patterns, temperamental distinctions and race memories, there are the stimuli and pressures of the living examples of alternative cultures. Man is influenced even more by example than by precept. Before 1947 the weight of example was heavily biased towards the West. Many, indeed,

held that this was the only source for change and innovation, if any change there was to be. Since then Russia has come into its own as presenting an alternative organization of society based on an alternative economic and ethical analysis. But Russia itself was part of western society; its institutions based on communism could be called the historical counterpart to the capitalist orthodoxy of the other half of the western world. More recently still China has offered a third model of society. It is itself tinctured with western thought in its communist theory, though this itself is a heresy of Russian communism (or so the Russians think) as Russian communism is a heresy of western capitalism. Be this as it may, China has combined its communist principles and Chinese patterns in a highly original way which must be of great interest to large traditionalist agricultural societies. She seems, on the surface at least, to be the only one to have attained something like a synthesis of opposites, a reconciliation of old and new, a sense of liberation combined with a respect for authority. It is through these ideological cross-currents, technological tides and past the shoals of conflicting examples that the Indian ship of state has to steer her way.

NEHRU'S INDIA

Crisis and Consolidation

Independence was inaugurated at midnight of 14/15 August 1947 (14 August having been adjudged unlucky by the astrologers). Jawaharlal made his now famous speech to the Constituent Assembly of which this is the key passage:

'Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance. It is fitting that at this solemn moment we take the pledge of dedication to the service of India and her people and to the larger cause of humanity.'

It was a noble ideal, nobly phrased, but no-one then present realized how soon these sentiments would be put to the severest test. Partition, it was thought, had solved the problem of communal tension; and if Mahatma Gandhi, disillusioned by the rejection of his ideal of a united India (Akhand Hindustan) refused to rejoice and was touring in the remote countryside of north-east Bengal, it was thought that the saint would eventually come to Delhi since Delhi would not go to the saint. In the glow of that belief Delhi celebrated independence on the following day. A million people thronged the processional way in New Delhi. Nehru

and the Mountbattens were separated and nearly overwhelmed in a sea of happy faces and chanting voices.

But the next day the reaction began. The Pandora's box of Sir Cyril (later Lord) Radcliffe's boundary award, purposely delayed until the achievement of independence, was opened. Hindu Indians, Pakistanis and Sikhs had accepted it in advance, so that the raising of the lid from the box might have been considered a formality. But this was not so. Sir Cyril, the Chairman of the Boundary Commission, was a judge chosen for his legal acumen and reputation for fairness. One of the qualifications for his appointment was that he had no knowledge of India. He was immediately left with the sole task and responsibility of drawing boundaries and deciding disputed points within a six-week deadline. With limitations of time, knowledge and understanding, it was virtually impossible to deal adequately with the often vital accessories of a boundary line—such as the location of the canal headwaters in relation to the canals themselves, communications by road and rail, the fate of mixed or isolated populations and such 'invisible' problems as the location of pasture lands in relation to villagers' flocks and herds.

The result of any such inquiry along such lines would be predictably uncertain, and so it was in Sir Cyril Radcliffe's case. His only consolation was that the cries of anguish came from both sides. Disapproval and resentment in such a situation was natural but there were three areas of special grievance. The Pakistanis resented the exclusion of Calcutta from Eastern Pakistan; much was made of this at the time, but in view of the city's geographical position and existing circumstances, it is hard to believe that they really expected to have it. The case was different in the Panjab, where the allotment of half the mixed Gurdaspur district to India made access to Kashmir practicable by means of a new road running from Pathankot. Pakistanis still accuse Lord Radcliffe, without any tangible evidence, of collusion with Lord Mountbatten in this matter. The third area of grievance was more crucial still, for it concerned the Sikhs. They had, it is true, accepted the award in advance like the other main parties. Yet there was always a body of activist dissent with Master Tara Singh as its spokesman. They now found their community, some four million strong in the Panjab, neatly divided down the middle. It was as if Solomon's proposal of equal division of a living child had actually been practised on the Sikhs. Yet what else could the Boundary Chairman do? Nowhere were the Sikhs in a majority, and they spilled, in almost equal proportions, on both sides of the line. The accommodation of the Sikhs, an ethnic, linguistic and partially cultural unit as well as a religious one, was really a diplomatic matter which should have been settled at the top level by the other chief parties concerned. As it was, however short-sighted they may have been before the Award, they now felt themselves frustrated, betrayed and truncated. For Sikhs this was something not to be borne. The upshot was the Panjab massacres.

The Sikhs had already been in conflict with the Muslims in the last

days of the old Panjab province. Sikhs had been largely eliminated from Lahore, and Muslims from Amritsar. So the Sikh uprising soon became a Sikh-Muslim civil war, with Hindu Jats joining in the East Panjab. Centuries-old memories and recent resentments had bred a tension which turned conflict into massacres. The tale of slaughtered villagers, attacks on convoys, trainloads of dead has often been related. No-one was innocent and no-one profited. The aftermath was migration, exile, hate and folk memory of conflict. The loss of life was estimated by Judge Khosla, a keen and cautious observer, at half a million people. The devastation in terms of the injured, misery and hate was far greater. The refugees (about five and a half million) who poured into West Pakistan were nearly one-fifth of its then population, while the roughly equal number of Sikhs and Hindus moving eastwards were about the same proportion of the Indian Panjab and western Uttar Pradesh. In addition 400,000 left Sind. So the whole of north-western India was embittered by experiences whose memories and folk-tales will reverberate down the generations like the folklore surrounding the raids of Mahmud of Ghazni.

Could this carnage, the time-bomb of Indo-Pakistan relations, have been prevented? Mountbatten foresaw the danger and assembled a boundary force of 50,000 men. But Nehru refused to allow any British troops to participate; when the moment of crisis came, the force proved too involved on either side to be effective. As the columns of refugees moved south-east into India, they spread consternation, hatred and violence. In late August Delhi was engulfed in its own civil war and refugee excesses. For a time the existence of the central government itself was threatened. Mountbatten, who had gone to Simla for a break, was asked by V. P. Menon, on the instructions of Nehru and Patel, to return immediately. He demurred and talked of the next day or so. In that case, piped back Menon's voice, there was no need to bother, for there would be no central government. This was the point of no return; the three men then formed a triumvirate which planned and carried through an effective rescue operation.

After the violence came the settlement of the refugees. In the Panjab there were at least the lands vacated by the departing Muslims. But to Delhi many more came than went. They thronged the public places, they set up shops in the streets, they commandeered mosques. Tension built up during the autumn and with it came the Mahatma from Bengal. His 'one-man' army had quelled a last outbreak of communal fighting in Calcutta in September. He arrived in Delhi to find the Muslim minority now threatened with a pogrom. Most serious, there was some sympathy within the government for these attitudes. He started his daily prayer meetings at the Birla mansion in Albuquerque Road and soon found that it was the Muslims he was now called upon to champion. In January the inner voice spoke: he called for the already agreed payment of assets to Pakistan (withheld since the Kashmir dispute had broken in the previous October), and a peace pact in Delhi, including the evacuation of fifty-

seven occupied mosques. He began a fast to death and when Vallabhbhai Patel remonstrated with him, he said with his failing breath, 'You are not the Vallabhbhai I have known.' Only on the payment of the money and the conclusion of the peace pact did he give up his fast an 18 January 1948. It was the noblest and most courageous action in his life.

The fast was a great moral victory, but it was also his death warrant. While he talked of walking to Pakistan on a peace mission, a Pune group within the R.S.S. had determined to kill him. It was not only because he was an opponent of Brahmin orthodoxy but insistently because he now appeared as the champion of the Muslims. The first attempt failed; the second should never have occurred had not some officials been more concerned with the letter than the spirit of their duties. As it was, while coming out to his prayer meeting at the accustomed time, he was shot at close range by Nathuram Godse and died with the words 'Ram, Ram' on his lips.

India was shaken to its foundations. The press of a million mourners at his cremation was so great that Governor-General Mountbatten and Prime Minister Nehru and their friends were nearly pushed into the flames they had come to witness and honour. Jawaharlal, catching again the spirit of the moment, said to the nation on the radio: 'The light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere . . . the father of the nation is no more . . . The best prayer we can offer him and his memory is to dedicate ourselves to truth and to the cause for which this great countryman of ours lived and for which he died.'

When the shock of horror and grief subsided it was found that the Mahatma was even more powerful in death than he had recently seemed to be in life. The revulsion of feeling discredited Hindu extremist bodies; even Sardar Patel came under criticism as Home Minister for inadequate security arrangements. Within the government itself the Sardar and Jawaharlal had an emotional reconciliation. The government acquired a new unity and the people a fresh resolution. Whereas there had previously been something of a tug-of-war between Vallabhbhai Patel, the realist, the Hindu champion, the friend of big business and the political boss, and Jawaharlal Nehru, the idealist, the advocate of tolerance, the democrat and the socialist, they now formed a duumvirate. For a time harmony prevailed while Patel dealt with the Princes in his forthright fashion. Before the rift could reopen widely enough for an open breach he died of a heart attack in December 1950.

After the crisis, consolidation. Order restored, the refugees in the process of resettlement, the Government could turn to the problems it had inherited from the British. The first of these was the Princes, large and small, numbering about 362 from Hyderabad with its seventeen million inhabitants to a borderland of tiny states and large estates. The British had renounced their treaty rights and had advised all to join one or other of the two new states. An attempt by the Nawab of Bhopal and some political officers to form 'a third force' foundered on the usual rock of

princely jealousy. By Independence Day all but Hyderabad, Kashmir, Junagadh and Travancore had joined either India or Pakistan. Unity was paramount, the Government believed; Sardar Patel and his agent, V. P. Menon, set themselves to persuade, cajole or bully the princes into joining existing federal units or joining new federal units of their own. Never was the velvet glove presented by Menon so soft or the hand within so steely. The inducements were personal privileges, freedom from income-tax and the opportunity of taking part in all-India public affairs (since availed of by many), the threats of economic and political isolation and the spectre of popular movements within the States. By these means all save the first three mentioned above were included in the new federal Union of India within a few months. Travancore surrendered after a few days. Mysore became a state on its own; some like Travancore and Cochin and the Rajput states were thrown together to form the respective new states of Kerala and Rajasthan, while some just disappeared into the nearest successor Indo-British state. Some princes were given the title of Rajpramukh and other considerations, but all lost their authority.

The three exceptions could now be dealt with. Junagadh, a small seaport state in Kathiawar with a Hindu majority and a Muslim nawab, opted for Pakistan. But it was surrounded by Indian territory; after a few weeks it was occupied by Indian troops and voted by plebiscite to join the Indian Union. Pakistan protested, but the issue was too small to become a major question. Hyderabad was another matter. The Nizam did not refuse accession but haggled about its terms. A year's standby was agreed while discussions went on. He refused good terms negotiated for him by British advisers and then allowed an extremist body, the Razakars, to seize control and inaugurate something like a reign of terror. The State was landlocked; eighty-five per cent of its population was Hindu; Pakistani intervention was impossible. The Razakars gave Nehru the excuse he needed for his 'police action' in the summer of 1948, which incorporated Hyderabad in the Indian Union. Later (in 1956) it was divided among the linguistically reorganized states in the Deccan, the major portion going to the Telugu-speaking state of Andhra.

There remained the case of Kashmir. In many respects it was unique. Its territories touched both the new states so that it could reasonably join either. It was a mixed state with a Hindu-Sikh majority in Jammu and a Muslim majority in the Vale and elsewhere, a large overall Muslim majority and a Hindu ruler. It was also a conglomerate state, consisting of the Hindu-Dogra chiefship of Jammu, of the principality of Kashmir proper purchased by the Dogra chief Gulab Singh from the British (who had captured it from the Sikhs who had taken it from an Afghan Muslim) and of various mountain dependencies like Gilgit, Hunza, Ladakh and Baltistan.

At first it was assumed that the state would opt for Pakistan. But Raja Hari Singh, the ruler, dallied, having secret hopes of independence. When Mountbatten visited him to bring matters to a head, he had a

diplomatic illness. So uncertainty continued until October 1947, when a force of Pathan tribesmen burst into the state and would have taken Srinagar before Indian help could arrive had they not stopped to sack Baramula on the way. In panic the ruler acceded to India which airlifted troops just in time to save the Kashmir vale. India then claimed the legal right of accession and denounced the tribesmen as aggressors. Pakistan called for a plebiscite to which Nehru agreed in principle; the question was then referred to the newly-formed United Nations. Relations continued to be tense and flared up into a three weeks' war in April 1948. Then a United Nations truce force froze the then battle-line into a *de facto* boundary which has since continued. This was the start of the complex Kashmir question, which will be further considered in connection with Indo-Pakistan relations in general.

The last of the initial tasks facing the new government was the framing of a new constitution. The Constituent Assembly which listened to Nehru declaring a 'tryst with destiny' had been elected from the provincial legislatures set up by the Government of India Act of 1935. Now there were new ideas, new principles clamouring for expression and new conditions which made the old arrangements seem archaic. The Constitution was passed by the existing Constituent Assembly of 292 members through discussions which ran remarkably smoothly under Nehru's leadership. To him, to the Law Minister, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the Scheduled caste leader, and to Sir Maurice Gwyer, a principal architect of the 1935 Act and ex-Chief Justice, who was active behind the scenes in New Delhi, India owed much at this time. There was the 1935 Act as a model, long passages from which were drafted unaltered into the new constitution. There was Nehru, tolerant, enthusiastic, far-seeing and unusually patient. Though Congress had an overwhelming majority in the Assembly, he listened to suggestions from all parties and was willing to incorporate suitable ones in the new text. Dr. Ambedkar, a leading architect of the constitution, was not in fact a member of the Congress party. The final result was as near to a consensus as can be achieved in public life, and this helps to explain the vitality which the constitution has displayed over a generation. Nehru was also open to ideas from any part of the world, welding the whole into a consistent body of ideas and practice. Thus ideas of fundamental rights and a Federal Supreme Court came from the United States, of constitutional directives from Eire and some federal ideas from Canada.

Congress was pledged to democracy and federalism; for these purposes it took ideas from the West and adapted them to Indian conditions. It was also determined to include Indian elements in the constitution and this too found expression in its provisions. Nehru himself was convinced of the need for a strong centre if India was to be held together and the necessary dynamic for development provided.

There was first a declaration of fundamental rights which forms the preface to the constitution. Then comes a series of constitutional direc-

tives or aims of endeavour. The actual provisions of the constitution set up a federal and parliamentary system of government. There was universal adult suffrage which was the basis of all elections. The Central legislature consisted of the Lok Sabha (Council of the People), which represents the people as a whole, and the Rajya Sabha (Council of the States) indirectly elected by the States' legislatures and representing the States of the Union. The Executive, headed by the Prime Minister, was responsible to the Lok Sabha, though formally appointed by the President. These two houses, like the provincial legislatures, were all elected for a five-year term, subject to earlier dissolution by the Executive. The Federal government was matched by the States' ministries, whose heads were called Chief Ministers. The Head of the State was the President, also serving a five-year term, and elected by the Central and States' legislatures sitting jointly. He is a constitutional sovereign acting on the advice of his ministers, but he has certain reserve powers such as taking over the administration of politically deadlocked states. But the function which might one day put him into a position like that of the inter-war German President Hindenburg is that of choosing the Prime Minister. As long as one party holds a majority there is no problem, but should parties dissolve into groups his would be the crucial hand in devising majority combinations.

The Federal legislative system is defined by separate lists of central and state powers with a 'concurrent' list which the Centre can use if it wishes. It is the allotment of powers which determines the balance of the constitution; the Centre has sole control of defence, foreign affairs, railways, posts and currency. Its reserve powers and dominant financial position have with these given it the strength to carry through the great programmes of development. There is a comparatively simple provision for the amendment of the constitution; there must be a bare majority of the membership of both legislative houses and a two-thirds majority of those present. The constitution is guarded by the creation of a federal Supreme Court, which interprets the constitution and decides disputes between states.

Specifically Indian features of the constitution were present but muted. There was the 'abolition' of untouchability (art. 17), the ignoring of caste distinctions (arts. 15(ii) and 16(ii)), and praise for panchayats, which was later converted into fruitful legislation. But the most Indian part of the constitution was the manner of its working. Most observers (including Nehru I think) expected the emergence of a two-party system, the usual pre-condition for the successful working of a parliamentary regime. Instead, the Congress monolith has remained—unaffected even by a one-time split down the middle—with a variety of splinter groups which might without disrespect be called mostly chips from the old block. Only a local non-Congress party like the D.M.K. of Madras and the C.P.I.(M) have shown independent vitality. The real divisions have been within the Congress rather than outside it. The leader has been secure in the Lok

Sabha, and has tended to use it as a sounding board for national opinion; as a place to hear views, petitions and complaints and to address the nation for its good. In fact the Lok Sabha has become a durbar of the traditional sort where the leader is seen, advised, commands and admonishes. Nehru, convinced democrat as he was, concealed this process by his scrupulous observance of democratic forms. But it was he, with his prestige as a founding father of the nation, who in fact introduced it. Some such development was perhaps inevitable in view of India's strong authoritarian and hierarchical traditions. Rather than condemning him as a covert authoritarian one should perhaps be grateful for so gracious an interpretation of so strong a traditional trend.

Planning and Hope

INTERNAL

This section has advisedly been called Nehru's India. He dominated India as completely as De Gaulle did France, though in an entirely different way. What then was the nature of the man who for fifteen years was so identified with India by the world, that it could be said of him, as Louis XIV of France said of himself, '*L'état, c'est moi*'. Jawaharlal Nehru came of a Kashmiri Brahmin family one of whose ancestors, a Persian poet, migrated to Delhi in the early eighteenth century. The Emperor Farrukhsiyar granted him land on the bank of the Western Jumuna Canal whence the family took the new surname of 'Nehru' from the Persian word '*nahr*', a canal or watercourse. The nineteenth century saw the family in the service of the British; his father became a highly successful and anglicized lawyer at Allahabad. From here young Jawaharlal was sent to Harrow School and Trinity College, Cambridge, and was then called to the bar. He returned to India before 1914. So far he had followed the pattern of many a son of successful Indians; he returned to India a westernized, sophisticated and not very effective youth, with the apparent imprint of parental ambition rather than any sign of his own.

This diffident and overshadowed young man was transformed by the events after the First World War. Amritsar shocked him, official obtuseness stung him into a new awareness and Gandhi captivated him. His uncompromising naturalness aroused him, his care for the poor moved him. When the whole family joined the non-cooperation movement he found a new world among the *kisans* of Uttar Pradesh; his latent sense of social justice was aroused to breed his socialism after a study of the Russian model. He and Gandhi never really agreed but sparks of sympathy and inspiration ran between them, inspiring and sustaining him. In the twenties he travelled extensively and so acquired his grasp of the outside world. The loss of his wife Kamala made him a lonely man, more self-contained than before; he solaced himself with the society of Kamala's gift, his daughter Indira.

So in the late twenties he returned to India, brilliant, assured, a passionate nationalist and a believer in social justice. His advent was like a comet in the rather solid firmament of Congress stars; he became the idol of the left wing and sponsored, along with Subhas Bose, the independence resolution at the Calcutta Congress meeting in 1928. But the world did not realize that, though leftist in sentiment, he was tied by a silken thread to the Right, in his attachment, in the last resort, to the Mahatma's behests. Gandhi played on his temperament like a consummate musician on his violin, and it was only in 1947, with the premiership of free India before him on the one hand and the stark horror of civil war on the other, that he broke with his mentor on the issue of partition. During these years the country accepted him as Gandhi's designated heir; his temperamental outbursts were forgiven in the inspiration of his charisma. This was why he, rather than the much more senior Patel, became the first Prime Minister of India.

There were still many, however, who doubted whether he had the staying power, the resilience to deal with successive crises, the temper to manage a cabinet team and the party managers, the finesse to deal with intrigues and the firmness to impose his will. Did he not depend unduly on other individuals like his father or the Mahatma or later Krishna Menon? These critics understandably failed to discern some of his latent qualities, but they also ignored something more significant. It was the charisma or compelling charm of which he had already given ample evidence but which they thought was merely a reflection of Gandhi's own. Was he not another Hamlet dismayed by his situation and groaning—

> The world is out of joint, O cursed spite,
> That ever I was born to set it right!

The first years of power and crisis dispelled these illusions. There was decision and action—in the Delhi breakdown and in Kashmir; there was leadership and management in dealing with his cabinet and handling the constitutional discussions. And there was finesse and expertise in his relations with Patel and the party. In addition he enhanced his image by his lightning tours and won hearts by his mass meetings. They were often more *darshans* (viewing and honouring the leader) than verbal means of communication, but they were a form of communion through which he received psychic strength. In this way he became the *mah-bap*, the mother-father, of the nation.

From the time of Patel's death Nehru stood above all others as the last surviving and vigorous founding father. What would he do with his immense prestige? To an extent he was the prisoner of his past. He was a disciple of Gandhiji but did not believe in non-violence. His early contact with the *kisans* of Uttar Pradesh (then the United Provinces) had impressed him with the immensity of India's poverty and with the evils of landlordism and entrenched property, and this led him to socialism as the pattern for Indian society. But his visit to Russia in the twenties

caused him to draw back from Communism as being too regimented in its organization and too harsh in its application. The individualist in Nehru was repelled and he remained a passionate believer in personal rights and democracy. These views had come from his western contacts and so did his secularism. So he was scornful of caste and the whole structure of traditional Hinduism. He was, he said, an Indian without caste or creed; he disliked the title of pandit and detested religious adulation. Nevertheless his Brahminic descent ensured his respect for the intellect; for him the fight against ignorance was coupled with the campaign against poverty.

Nehru's prescription against poverty was industrialization which would create more jobs in its construction and provide more goods in its production. This in turn required state regulation along socialist lines. For ignorance he turned to education with an emphasis on its higher levels and on technical skills. To deal with Brahminism there must be social reforms, a raising of the 'scheduled castes' and a reform of the Hindu social code.

This was a large programme. Nehru's prestige was unique, but it has to be noted that, except in the matter of industrialization, there was probably no majority for any part of it. Even his standing and charisma was not enough for this. Yet the great majority were too tied to his mystique and to the Congress to consider deserting him. The result, as veneration contended with personal inclination and vested interest, was that the real opposition concealed itself within the Congress party, while the overt opposition parties never really came to maturity. Once the veteran Patel had died and his heir, the orthodox Purshottamdas Tandon, had failed in his attempt to replace Nehru, there was not even a conspiracy or a cabal within the party formed against him. It was obstruction rather than rebellion, sabotage rather than open dissent which dogged him.

Before pursuing this theme it is well to note briefly the fate of the non-Congress groups during Nehru's premiership. Certain local parties, specially the D.M.K. of Madras and the Akali Dal (Sikh) in the Panjab, showed continued life because they represented permanent local interests. On the significant national level the story was more confused. At the Centre the Congress polled between 45 and 50 per cent of all the votes in the five general elections to date with the exception of 1967 when they still retained a bare majority of seats. Splinter groups aspiring to be national rivals of the Congress sprang like shoots from both sides of the political pipal tree. At independence the first of these was the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, representing orthodox Hindu sentiment, which always looked more powerful on paper than at the polls. During the war years it was dominated by the extremist Vir Savarkar. Its 'sword-arm' as it were, or activist wing, was the R.S.S. (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangha). Both parties were discredited by the latter's involvement in Gandhi's murder. The latter was suppressed and the former was aban-

doned by its new leader, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, who in 1952 left it to form the Jana Sangh (Bharatiya Jan Sangh or Indian People's Party). This body became important in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. It carried the Union Territory of Delhi in 1967 but could win majorities nowhere else and made little impact on the Congress majority in the Lok Sabha.

The Swatantra party was founded in 1959 by the veteran C. Rajagopalachari of Madras and M. R. Masani of Bombay. It drew its support from the industrial and landlord classes; it professed to believe in moderate reform while firmly unholding private property and enterprise, and opposing communism. It should have appealed to a wide spectrum of the middle class, rural as well as urban, for these were very widespread sentiments. In a two-party system it would have aspired to the conservative role. But this would have required many sympathizers to withdraw their support from the Congress, and this, so long as it maintained its mystique as the embodiment of the nation's will to freedom, they were unwilling to do. The party made good progress at first, winning 18 out of 507 seats in the 1962 elections for the Lok Sabha, and emerging in the States as the third-largest party. In 1967, the year of splinter party elections and relative Congress eclipse, they did still better. Thereafter the party declined as the Congress recovered its prestige, and is now much as it began, a splinter group.

To the left of the central monolith there was first the Socialists. A group of Congress Socialists was formed in 1934 by Jai Prakash Narayan. Disillusioned by alleged Congress failures in its social policies this group became an independent party in 1948. Four years later it united with another Congress splinter group, the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (Peasants, Workers and Peoples' Party) which had split off from the Congress the year before led by the dissident Gandhian leader, the astringent but dedicated Acharya Kripalani. He was dissatisfied with the Congress attitude towards the cultivators and industrial labour. But after four years they split into the Praja Socialist Party and Socialist Party, and so both became ineffective. Their fortunes were not helped by Narayan's retirement into a holier than thou detachment from public life.

This leaves the Communist Party, founded in 1920 and trounced by the British government in the Meerut trials at the end of the decade. It had a brief moment of hope with the peasant risings in Hyderabad in 1950. When these were suppressed the party abandoned its militant tactics but was then rent with schism. The Moscow-backed Communist Party of India (CPI) gained between twenty and thirty Lok Sabha seats (out of over 500) in each general election to be the largest opposition party and held power for a time in the State of Kerala. Its main rival was the more militant Communist Party of India (Marxist) with a further pro-Chinese Marxist-Leninist group, who looked to a rural revolution in Chinese style and got the epithet of Naxalite from Naxalbari, the name of a Bengal village, which first brought them into prominence.

When the strongest opposition party could only gain five per cent of the Lok Sabha seats in five successive elections, it could hardly be claimed that a two-party parliamentary system was emerging. We can now see what Jawaharlal Nehru did with his large majority and how he managed the covert opposition within its ranks. His first care was the implementation of his democratic principles. This he achieved with the new constitution with its two hundred million voters, its parliamentary system, its civic rights buttressed by the law courts. The system is federal and the Centre strong as he believed it to be necessary. In this work he had a very large measure of support and it was never seriously challenged before the Emergency, which was avowedly temporary. Linked with this subject was the complex question of a national language. Nehru himself spoke Urdu or Hindustani in the tradition of the intelligentsia of the former United Provinces. Congress had opted for Hindi and he went along with this policy, though without any enthusiasm. But he also wished English to remain as a joint national language. His reason was the importance of maintaining links with the outside world, for which English was the best instrument available, and consideration for the feelings of South India. This did not suit Hindi zealots or South Indian purists, but the arrangement lasted Nehru's lifetime. The wisdom of this view was confirmed by the southern reaction to the announcement in 1965 of Hindi as the sole national language. The development of local languages had another effect, a demand for the redrawing of state boundaries to reflect linguistic distinctions. This subject is dealt with later in this section (see p. 419).

An adjunct of Nehru's democratic principles was a dislike of privilege. This was revealed clearly in his attitude to the princely order, with whom Sardar Patel dealt so quickly and smoothly. As this attitude spread to the countryside it became linked with his ideas of rural uplift. Zamindari or landlord right, a legacy of earlier British land settlements, was abolished by 1956; there was some redistribution of land and breaking up of large estates and protection of tenancy rights. The policy was bold and far-reaching, but its performance patchy and piecemeal because execution lay in the hands of the States. Some observers have even contended that the policy had more loopholes for evasion than closed doors for enforcement. The need for further action was underlined by the campaign of Vinobha Bhave, Gandhi's chosen first *satyagrahi* in the civil disobedience campaign of 1940, for *bhoodan* or voluntary transfers of land from landlord to cultivators. In 1951 he began his walks from village to village, seeking land gifts (*gramdan*) from landlord to tenant farmers. He continued his pilgrimage for twenty years. Opinions vary as to its effectiveness; at any rate it was a striking demonstration of Gandhian principles in action and served as a running reminder to the country that the redistribution of the land had not yet gone far enough.

In this sphere Nehru's ideas had been hindered by state action and manipulation. In his policy of industrial development he had no such

propertied sieve through which to pass his levelling proposals. It was a matter for the Centre. In 1950, arising out of the Colombo Plan for mutual development by the states of south and south-east Asia, he established the National Planning Commission with himself as the first Chairman. This was strengthened by the creation of a larger National Development Council two years later. The Planning Commission drew up a succession of five-year plans for national development, the economic inspiration coming from Professor Mahalanobis. The aim was to raise the national standard of living by means of greater agricultural production, thus making India more self-sufficient, and industrial development which would, by increasing production and so jobs, and by stimulating trade, increase the gross national product faster than the rate of population growth. A balance between types of activity had to be maintained and gaps in Indian resources filled by supplies of foreign capital.

The objective of planning was to be a mixed economy with a public and a private sector. Basic industries were to be owned and developed by the state and other sections by private capital. In the public sector were placed steel plants, oil and its products, electrical works, machine making, aircraft and shipbuilding. In the private sector there were textiles, cement, engineering and motor manufacture. There was a practical as well as a theoretical reason for this division. Private capital, which was responsible for only six per cent of the national income at Independence, could not raise the sums required for the large projects reserved for the public sector.

The first plan was launched in 1951. It placed special emphasis on the increase of agricultural production in order to free India from a crippling dependence on foreign supplies. This was considered a great success, production increasing by 25 per cent over the five-year period. At the same time the Bhakra–Nangal dam project near Ropar at the head of the Sutlej Himalayan valley, planned by the British, was undertaken. The great power and irrigation projects of the Damodar valley and the Hirakud valley were also started. The second five-year plan was more ambitious, the total outlay at seven thousand eight hundred crores of rupees being twice that of the first. The emphasis was on industrialization and it was now that the three great steel plants, already started during the first plan and sponsored respectively by Great Britain, West Germany and Russia, were developed. The plan aimed to increase the national income by 25 per cent, and though it did not achieve this object fully, its performance was greater than that of the first plan because of its larger scale. Credit difficulties were resolved by foreign loans, particularly from the United States. The third plan of 1961 outlived Nehru. It involved an expenditure of eight thousand million pounds, and aimed at expanding basic industries and making India self-sufficient in its food-supply. Difficulties increased in the supply of foreign currency despite aid from the World Bank. These difficulties delayed the start of the fourth plan until 1969. The achievement of the first decade was great; it was claimed that

national income had risen by 42 per cent, income per head by 20 per cent and consumption by 16 per cent.

This was Nehru's bid to attack India's problem of poverty. Next comes his attack on ignorance. Congress was committed to universal education; Nehru was one of those to whom this was a genuine intention rather than a pious aspiration. There was a large extension of higher and technical education and of research studies; universities, institutes of technology and research centres proliferated; there were more than eighty of such bodies by the end of his premiership. The emphasis was especially on science and technology because these spheres were thought to have been the weakest during the British period. Research centres, ranging from foodgrains and fertilizers to atomic research, also spread widely and purposefully. General universities grew so much that a surplus of graduates reappeared despite the increased job opportunities created by the expansion of industry and commerce.

The story was rather different in the case of elementary education. Here Nehru was hampered by the allotment of education to the states. In the case of higher studies the Centre could intervene on the ground of an overriding national interest; with primary education it was not so easy. In the upshot universal elementary education was generally enforced in the large cities but lagged behind in the countryside. Literacy at Independence had been about 15 per cent; at the end of the Nehru era it was reckoned at about 25 to 30 per cent, the ratio of boys to girls being two to one. Democratic idealism would seem to have met here the traditional reluctance of the upper castes to enlighten the masses.

One of the subjects nearest to Nehru's heart was civic rights, and particularly the rights of women. Here also was a field where orthodox opposition was strong. But he was here following in the wake of Gandhi with his attacks on caste restrictions and emphasis on human dignity. Nehru carried the process further in the sphere of Hindu personal law, still largely based on the venerable compilation, *The Laws of Manu*. In this system the group overshadowed the individual and the woman was subordinate to the man. Nehru hoped to reform the Hindu Code by legislation passed in a single session. But the Congress party contained its quota of traditionalists; it was not until 1955 that the Hindu Succession Act and 1956 that the Hindu Marriage Act became law. Even now the whole process is not complete. The first gave to women equal rights with men in the matter of the succession to and the holding of property. The second put monogamy on a legal footing, providing for divorce with alimony and maintenance. Two further acts protected the Hindu widow and separated wives with maintenance provisions, and provided for the guardianship of minors and a stricter control of adoptions. These measures amounted to a major achievement in the circumstances. Sceptics may argue that the peasant mass is still largely unaffected. But the new lands are certainly effective in the middle class; and this is a rapidly growing body and the eventual arbiter of opinion.

Gandhi's campaign for the 'Untouchables' continued. They were the anthropologist's 'exterior castes', Gandhi's Harijans or People of God, and the Constitution's 'Scheduled Castes' because they were listed in separate state schedules. According to the 1961 census, they numbered 64.5 millions, and there were nearly 30 million more classified as 'Scheduled tribes'. All these were loosely called the 'Depressed classes'. Legislation was passed against discrimination in such matters as access to wells, shops and entertainments; but the main form of government action was help in the form of educational grants, quotas of employment, etc. It can be said that this part of the social programme has gone steadily forward with, if many Brahmin witnesses are to be believed, considerable success.

Here may be mentioned Nehru's major venture into 'Indianism'. This was the launching of what was called 'Panchayati raj', a great endeavour to revive village life by giving rural communities local committees with independent powers subject to guidance and stimulus from local officials. A pilot plan was launched in 1952 with fifty-five selected projects using substantial help from America. Each area covered about 500 square miles and 500 villages, within which a wide programme of development, including panchayats, was inaugurated. This pilot scheme grew into Panchayati raj with the decision of the National Development Council in 1958. The panchayat, the co-operative and the school were the basic village institutions, the elected panchayat being in charge. From it sprang all other activities, of women, youth, farming, culture, etc. There is an ascending order of local activity, from the village, through 'the Block' and the Zila to State headquarters. The Block Panchayat Samiti contains the elected presidents of village panchayats (Sarpanches) and the same rule applies to the Zila Parishads. Remembering that there are about 800,000 villages in India one gets an idea of the magnitude of the undertaking and also, despite some setbacks, shortcomings and deviations, of the significance of its achievement.

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EXTERNAL

In foreign affairs Nehru at first enjoyed almost complete freedom of action. There were good reasons for this. Since the thirties he had been the Congress specialist on foreign affairs. He alone had foreseen the Second World War. The other Congress leaders had for the most part little knowledge of and less interest in the outside world. The Hindu tradition, still potent, was inward-looking and exclusive. But though the Indian public took little interest in the outer world, they had a lively sense of their position within that world. Still conscious of the smothering effect of foreign domination, they eagerly desired global recognition, a recognition which should include not only Great Britain but the United States and Russia as well. Nehru was the man with the necessary knowledge, flair

and will; he was the Joshua to lead India into the promised land of the wider world.

Nehru himself was willing and indeed insistent on assuming this role. He retained the Ministry of External Affairs in his own hands throughout his premiership and during that time was equated with India itself in the eyes of the international community. For them India was Nehru. What then were the basic concepts from which sprang his actions? First, arising from the country's immediate past, came a strong feeling of national independence. Also connected with that past and heightened by post-war developments was the sentiment of anti-colonialism. Then came the positive idea of internationalism, with its sub-heads of co-operation, conciliation and peace-making; and finally, arising from post World War conditions, that of neutralism, or, as Nehru preferred to call it, non-alignment.

Early post-war conditions provided a favourable milieu for these views, so that Nehru seemed for some time to be swimming on the crest of a world wave. Political colonialism was dying but some of its wrecks and survivals still strewed the Asian scene. The nationalist wind was blowing strongly, comfortably billowing Nehru's sails with this title. Internationalism was having the boom associated with the founding of the United Nations at San Francisco in 1945. Within a year or two of Independence the Russian achievement of the atomic bomb conjured the spectre of a world atomic holocaust to give substance to his policy of non-alignment.

The policy of rounding off Indian independence in the sub-continent raised the preliminary question of relations with Britain. In 1947 India had become a Dominion, a decision not unconnected with the influence of its first independent Governor-General, Lord Mountbatten. Nehru wished to retain this link but there was strong support for the *purna swaraj* or complete independence. The solution found in the new constitution was one which served as a precedent for many Commonwealth countries later. India became a Republic, but remained a member of the Commonwealth; she elected her own President while the King (or Queen) became Head of the Commonwealth. This arrangement has proved workable and was ratified, so to speak, by Queen Elizabeth II's successful visit to India in 1961.

The assertion of Indian sovereignty within the sub-continent led directly to a confrontation with Pakistan. Junagadh and Hyderabad were absorbed with little difficulty. The French agreed to cede their Indian possessions, including Pondicherry, and this was regularized by a treaty in 1956. Ceylon, after some early nervousness because of her Tamil population, settled down to neighbourliness, if without much enthusiasm. In Nepal India is credited with having encouraged the overthrow of the Rana regime in 1951 and the rise of the Nepali Congress party. But here again there was never any serious intention of annexation, and relations settled into correctness and a balance of influence between India and China at the Nepali court. Portugal proved more difficult with its important

enclave of Goa and lesser stations elsewhere. The Portuguese treated Goa as part of their metropolitan territory, a view quite unacceptable to nationalist India. Relations grew gradually worse until Goa was finally occupied by military force in December 1961.

This left Pakistan, with whom confrontation came over Kashmir and the allotment of assets at Partition. We have already noted in the *Crisis* part of this section the settlement of the latter and the first phase of the former. The short war of April 1948 had been complicated by the Indian denial of water to Pakistani canals. This issue, along with those of refugee property and Kashmir, was carried over to the next period. The property problem dragged to an indeterminate close in the fifties. Water remained a critical issue, heightened by the Indian intention to absorb the whole Sutlej outlet for its own development. In 1960 an agreement was reached with President Ayub Khan which settled a vital problem imaginatively and thoroughly. The criss-cross canal pattern of the undivided Panjab was transformed; India was to have the outfall of the three eastern rivers, the Sutlej, Beas and Ravi, while Pakistan had the three western ones, the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab. To supplement the waters of the last two a series of cross canals was constructed with the aid of loans from the World Bank to which the United States and Britain contributed. This settlement proved real and was a remarkable demonstration of Nehru's prescience and ingenuity.

Kashmir then and since has remained the running sore of Indo-Pakistan relations. Controversy centred round the terms of the plebiscite to which Nehru had originally agreed. Successive United Nations' efforts (by General McNaughton, Sir Owen Dixon and Dr. F. Graham) to secure agreement proved abortive; eventually Kashmir drew up its own constitution and voted for union with India, after which Nehru considered the matter closed. It was widely said at the time of the first conflict that Patel would have ceded Kashmir on the principle of the fewer the Muslims in India the better. Nehru's view was different. For him nationalism was all important; a Kashmir willingly united with India would be a living proof of its viability in Indian conditions. And he regarded the popular Kashmiri vote for Union as that proof.

There was also a good field for Nehru's anti-colonialist feelings. The old colonialist powers were there to be suspected; there was the debris of past colonialisms to clear away. Britain might be thought to have repented, but Britain was much weaker than before. The United States, the champion of freedom, was also the home of the dollar, and the dollar came to be more feared than American democracy was loved. So when the United States, in the name of the United Nations, went to the defence of South Korea in 1950, India stood aloof, only co-operating on humanitarian matters. Similarly she remained aloof in Indo-China, only co-operating in the aftermath of the Geneva Conference of 1954. The emphasis was on mediation, not war.

But elsewhere in South-East Asia India was more belligerent. An in-

formal Asian Relations Conference met in New Delhi in 1946 and laid the foundation of Asian co-operation. This was followed by another, official conference in January 1949 after the second Dutch 'police action' had taken Jogjakarta in Central Java. Nehru dominated the conference and condemned the Dutch; the Conference resolutions won the support of the United Nations' Security Council so that by the year's end Indonesian independence had been won. Here was success indeed; from this time was born the rather vague concept of 'Asianism', hatched in the fertile brain of Sardar K. M. Panikkar. The dream that there was such a thing as an Asian 'personality', which India and Nehru embodied and led, faded with the Asian-African Conference at Bandung in Java in 1955. Nehru was again prominent and eloquent on anti-colonialism, but the advent of Communist China, in the person of Chou En-lai, signalled the end of India's single unquestioned leadership. There were now 'two kings in Brentford'.

Nehru was a good internationalist. India was a founder-member of the United Nations in 1945 and thereafter played a full part in its proceedings. Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, the Prime Minister's sister, was a President of the U.N.O. in its early years; India played a full part on the U.N.O.'s missions and commissions, and won international respect for its representatives' skill, efficiency and goodwill. But Nehru soon saw the limits of the U.N.O.'s authority and influence, and from this sprang the ideas of a third force and non-alignment. If the weaker and developing countries could get together, argued Nehru, they would warn the two giants that, in the event of a major war neither side would find any allies. Also they would pressurize the great powers themselves by threatening to join the other side. And, in the event of atomic war, the Third World would survive the resulting holocaust. Along with this went his doctrine of Indian non-alignment. India would remain uncommitted to both eastern and western blocs; she would maintain relations and accept help from both. Steel plants were accepted from both Russia and the United States. There were visits to and from Moscow (by Bulganin and Khrushchev in 1955) and Nehru's visits to America. The advent of Mao's China on the international scene was at first turned by Nehru to his advantage. Again there were mutual visits, a result of which was the Panch Shila or five principles of non-interference and good neighbourliness. There developed a triangular relationship; Nehru saw China as the mediator between Russia and India, India as the interpreter of the communist world to Britain, and Britain as the bridge to American understanding. In sum, by 1956 India had won widespread respect and goodwill for her attitudes and achievements. Nehru was credited with almost wizard-like qualities of balance combined with idealism, of diplomatic adroitness and powers of conciliation. He was a world statesman to whom flowed the admiration and hopes of millions. It was his finest hour.

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Difficulty and Perplexity

INTERNAL

The year 1956 has been selected as marking a turning point in the Nehru regime because it contained the two incidents of the Hungarian revolt and the Anglo-French Suez adventure. In the former case the revolt was crushed by Russian troops and the Hungarian leader Imre Nagy executed; in the latter the overthrow of President Nasser's Egyptian government was thwarted by veiled American intervention. Collectively they gave a jolt to Nehru's reputation and exposed the first serious criticism of his handling of foreign affairs. This does not mean, of course, that the decline in his or Indian affairs was immediate or general. Some major achievements lay in the future like the settlement of the canal waters dispute with Pakistan in 1960. But from this time, while everything had previously seemed to be going in his favour, difficulties, doubts and perplexities began to emerge.

In the political sphere Nehru was no longer as supreme as he had once seemed. Freely comparing him with the Mughal emperors, critics forgot that even they were subject to various checks and limitations. There had always been opposition, mostly concealed within the Congress ranks. The slow passage of the Hindu Code bills was an indication of this. But now the overt opposition grew stronger and the concealed obstruction more obstinate. Overtly, the new Jana Sangh grew steadily in strength. Without many seats in the Lok Sabha, its links with traditional Hinduism enabled it to arouse Hindu feelings on sensitive issues which increasingly appeared and so influenced the government through its supporters. In 1959 the Swatantra party was founded and there was increasing activity in the socialist and communist camps.

Within the party Nehru had to face increasing factionalism within the States. Several State governments had to be suspended; in the Panjab the dynamic though brash Partap Singh Kairon was unseated for corruption, while in Uttar Pradesh Mrs. Sucheta Kripalani tried for four years as Chief Minister to get bitter rival factions to work together. Office seemed to be more tempting than programmes; the symptoms of loss of direction appeared as an epidemic of 'floor-crossing' and postponements in State assemblies. This process was reflected in the general elections of 1962, when the Congress percentage of votes for the Lok Sabha declined from 48 to 45 and State Congress majorities were eroded. The next year Nehru tried to revivify the party with the 'Kamraj plan' (named after the Madras Chief Minister from 1954 to 1963). Kamraj himself became the Congress President; six State chief ministers and six Union ministers retired to make way for younger and fresher blood. There was activity and manipulation but not much rejuvenation. The question 'where are we going?' gradually deepened into the complaint 'what has gone wrong?'; the phrase 'it's Nehru's fault' grew from a whisper to a murmur

and finally to an open charge. And this was followed by the final question 'after Nehru, who and what?'

At the beginning of this twilit period, however, there was one more major achievement, though, characteristically of this time, it was against Nehru's private wishes. It was the reorganization of the State structure on a linguistic basis, arising from the revival of the local languages and along with them, of local loyalties. Nehru was at first reluctant, fearing lest local cultural centres might become local power centres to the detriment of the Centre's control. Was New Delhi to become the centre of a South Asian United Nations, influencing without controlling its contending members? His hand was eventually forced by the hunger strike of Potti Sriramulu in the cause of the Telugu language and the desired Andhra State. His death in late 1952 caused the appointment of a Boundaries Commission of which Sardar K. M. Panikkar was the most active member. This resulted in 1956 in a radical reorganization of State boundaries along linguistic lines. Only Bombay still united Marathas and Gujaratis and the Panjab Sikhs and Hindus in single states. Within four years, however, Gujarat had insisted on separation from Bombay which became the State of Maharashtra. Six years later Nehru's daughter agreed to the division of Panjab into Panjab (Sikh *subah*) and Haryana (Hindu Jats). So far Nehru's forebodings have not been realized though there have been rumblings in the form of boundary disputes.

More daunting, because of their implications, were the economic difficulties which India increasingly experienced. During the first two five-year plans India was not only statistically enlarging her gross national income and her *per capita* income but was felt to be doing so. New industries were providing new jobs and greater expectations; more money was encouraging consumption and a feeling of being better off. There was hope, expectancy and a sense of achievement. Much of the benefit, it is true, went to the middle classes, but others also felt that things were moving their way. The burden of the plans thus became bearable. But by 1960 there was a change. The growth in the national income declined from 4.3 per cent per annum to 3 per cent against a planned 7 per cent in the third plan; while the *per capita* income (the ordinary citizen's touchstone of progress) remained static instead of increasing to between 8 and 9.5 per cent as it had done in each of the first two plans. India should have 'taken off' in the economic sense with the third plan, but instead there were currency, production and export difficulties. The sun went in just when it was expected to shine in full brilliance.

Some of this result was due to bad harvests (in 1963/4, 79.4 million tons of grain against a planned 100 millions), but the chief cause was the unexpectedly large increase in population which disconcerted the planners. In 1947 the population of the new India was reckoned to be about 320 millions. An alarm bell rang when a committee estimate of 408 millions by 1961 became a census figure of 439 millions with a growth rate of twelve millions a year. In 1971 the census figure was 547 millions. With

uncertain food and halting industrial production it seemed from about 1960 that India was beginning to move backwards rather than forwards. Voices were heard criticizing heavy industrialization, advocating birth control and increased food production. The planners were confused, the politicians resentful and recriminatory; there was bewilderment and indignation. India had lost her way; it was Nehru's fault, said the average citizen. But no-one knew how to find the path again, or, indeed, what sort of path it should be.

* * *

EXTERNAL

The Hungarian and Suez crises of 1956 have already been mentioned as signposts on the record of the Nehru regime. They administered the first jolt to the chariot of Nehru leadership. But why? Nehru's condemnation of the British action at Suez was vehement and decisive. This was in tune with the still existing anti-imperialist sentiments in India, and was generally approved. But in the case of Hungary there was hesitation and equivocation; the final condemnation was mild compared with the language used about Suez. It was this contrast which offended right wing and religious opinion. The effect was perhaps the greater, coming as it did at the time of Nehru's vacillation over the roles of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Bombay in the States reorganization of the same year.

At the same time there were changes in the world scene which gradually made some of the Nehru policies less relevant. In 1956 the first hydrogen bomb was exploded at Bikini atoll in the Pacific. It generated a force equal to that of ten million tons of T.N.T., many times that of the Hiroshima bomb. Though logically it could be described as just a larger bomb, it was soon realized that with it weapons of destruction had entered a new dimension. A Hiroshima bomb war would be lethally destructive, but not the ultimate catastrophe; a hydrogen bomb war would be just that. As this realization spread it was seen that total atomic war was no longer a practical proposition. If the atomic deterrent—or provocation—was no longer practical politics, a third international force and a policy of non-alignment, designed to deter the atomic powers from embarking on such a war, and, if unsuccessful, to survive its holocaust, ceased to have its former compelling force. As a footnote to the change, the U.S. Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, who hankered after the use of the bomb with his talk of 'agonizing reappraisals', died in 1960. Thereafter Russia and the United States, stealthily at first, began to approach one another. Non-alignment and anti-colonialism were no longer leading issues; at the Belgrade Conference of non-aligned Nations in 1961 Nehru himself characterized them as 'worn out'.

Then in 1960 came the Sino-Russian breach over economic and technical aid and atomic know-how. Nehru's balancing feats were now no longer needed. The decade opened with independence and revolution in

the Congo (now Zaire); henceforward the emerging African states became more and more an independent diplomatic group. India continued to act as an international mediator and harmonizer. But she was now one among many; her leadership role and 'special position' had evaporated.

It was at this point that relations with China deteriorated. The immediate cause was Tibet. With Independence India inherited the old Indo-British imperial frontiers. Pakistan took away the old north-west frontier with its Durand line; and as between Pakistan and India the disputed Kashmir frontier was defined by the UN truce line of 1948 (as it still is with some modifications). There remained the long frontier with China from the Karakorams to Burma with a gap for Nepal. The first section was in the north from Chinese Tibet to Sinkiang; the second ran eastwards to Sikkim about which there was no dispute, and the third was the stretch from Sikkim to Burma covered by the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA). In the first section lay the desolate Aksai Chin plateau, where the frontier between India and China had never been properly surveyed or agreed. A line on paper moved eastwards or westwards according to current diplomatic exigencies. The third line was the most sensitive because through it ran the road to Lhasa and the Tibetan heartland.

Aksai Chin was a strategical problem. The new China was reasserting its authority over Sinkiang and wanted an easy means of access there. Her plan, started in the early nineteen-fifties but not noticed officially by India till later, was to build an all-weather motorway across the plateau. Was it going over Indian or Chinese territory? The north-eastern problem was more difficult for it raised the whole matter of Indo-Tibetan-Chinese relations. China had long claimed suzerainty over Tibet, the old imperial China occupying Lhasa in a last attempt to assert it. The Simla conference of 1913–14 between the British, Tibetans and the new 'democratic' China produced a frontier known as the McMahon line. The Tibetans accepted it but the Chinese only initialled it. With the advent of the Mao regime in 1949 the Tibetan issue became crucial. The Chinese were determined to reassert their authority, but here they had to deal with the Buddhist Dalai Lama and Tibet's cultural and emotional links with India. Nehru recognized Chinese suzerainty (as the British had done) and advised the young Dalai Lama to co-operate with them. It was during this period that the Panch Shila were devised (1954).

Crisis came in 1959, when a Tibetan revolt led to the Dalai Lama's flight to India and the granting of asylum to him by Nehru. To this the Chinese objected and there began an acrimonious exchange of notes in which both sovereignty over the Aksai Chin plateau and the McMahon line were called in question. Diplomacy was overtaken by public feeling in India which championed the Dalai Lama on religious grounds and insisted on the full assertion of the old frontiers. It needed a young Nehru to solve this problem as it needed a young Napoleon to win Waterloo. But he was ageing; he was persuaded to order an advance beyond the McMahon line and there followed the Chinese 'incident'. There was tem-

porary consternation and fear of a full-scale Chinese invasion. As these alarms subsided Nehru was able to fend off the too-pressing American offers of help and alliance. He shuffled his ministers as before and began to think of a new settlement in Kashmir, sending for Sheikh Abdullah only a few weeks before his own death. The damage to India was much more in prestige than materially, and it was this which wounded the Prime Minister most. The army had seemed to be ineffective, the Chinese unexpectedly strong. Outside powers had been given an opportunity for interference of which they had taken advantage. The project of real independence, of Asian guidance and world moral leadership had collapsed; the 'cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces' of the vision had vanished.

At seventy-four Nehru was unable to start building afresh. His sudden death on 27 May 1964 was not entirely unexpected. But the shock was nearly as great as with Gandhi—'the light had gone out'. It had been shining but dimly in deepening twilight, but it still shone; people blamed Nehru for everything but couldn't do without him. The following evaluation is quoted from my *India: A Modern History*[1] which I don't feel I can better.

'In seeking to evaluate Nehru's reign one must avoid the extremes of adulation, which beset him during his first years of power, and of condemnation which echoed around and beyond his funeral pyre. It is true that what seemed to start as a triumphal march seemed to end in the tragedy of nemesis. But if the heights were not all scaled, the depths were not plumbed either. All was not lost and some very tangible things were gained. Surveying Nehru's work we find an air of half achievement. In politics we have a western democratic machine without a party system to work. There had been great industrial expansion but the economy had not 'got off the ground' in an economic sense, unemployment had not been cured and the standard of living remained low. A large middle class had been created but the gulf between it and the masses remained deep. Higher education had expanded but primary education had lagged. Universal education only existed in some cities. Social progress had been achieved in the reform of the Hindu Code, but the forces of reaction remained strong. The population had grown much faster than expected with little done to restrain it. This one factor threatened to counterbalance the other achievements together. Internationally, India had lost the halo of moral authority bequeathed by Gandhi.

'Yet all was not lost. The giant was wounded but still a giant. I think Nehru's greatest achievement was in the social sphere because his reforms may here have influenced Indian life most deeply. For the rest, he set India on the way to full membership of the developing world community, politically, industrially, educationally, culturally. He gave a sense of purpose for the future as well as pride in her past, and he laid foundations,

[1] India: *A Modern History,* 2nd edition, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, U.S.A, 1972, p. 451–2.

whatever faults there may have been in the superstructure which he added, upon which his successors have been able to build securely. At his death he was widely regarded as a fallen idol. We can now see him as a bruised and limping giant who had completed half the great causeway to the future to which he had set his hand.'

* * *

POST-NEHRU INDIA

Interlude and Crisis

The question 'after Nehru, who?' when first raised in the nineteen-fifties appeared to be more of a foreign correspondent's ploy or a cocktail party quiz than a genuine apprehension. From the time of his seventieth birthday in November 1959, however, the question became more relevant. But it was not until his serious illness in the spring of 1962 that the question began to press. Then came the China incident later in the same year to add the question, 'after Nehru, what?' This event damped Nehru's spirits for a time though his resilience soon reasserted itself. Indeed, in the following year he used the alarm caused by three bye-election defeats and concern about the state of the Congress Party to reorganize his ministry under the appellation 'Kamraj plan', as previously related. One of the more willing sacrifices on this occasion was the Home Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri. Nehru's deftness turned the episode into an act of oblivion for some of his less congenial colleagues like Morarji Desai, the Finance Minister, and S. K. Patil. But Lal Bahadur soon returned to the Cabinet as minister without portfolio to become a roving ambassador of conciliation. In this role he was conspicuously successful, in particular in the affair of the Prophet's Hair in Kashmir.

There then came the question of the Presidency of the Congress, likely now to be a key position after many years in the shade. It was to arrange this that the group known as the Syndicate or Caucus was formed in October 1963. It consisted at first of Kamraj himself, Atulya Ghose, the Congress 'boss' of West Bengal, Sanjiva Reddy of Andhra Pradesh, Nijalingappa of Mysore (Karnataka) and S. K. Patil of Bombay. It was somewhat anti-Hindi and strongly anti-Morarji on the grounds that he was too strong a 'Hindiwallah', too aggressive a capitalist and personally dictatorial. The election of Kamraj as President of the Congress having been arranged, it became clear with Nehru's stroke in January 1964 that the Syndicate would soon have more important duties still.

Thus, when Nehru died there was a group ready to act while the most prominent candidate and strongest personality, Morarji Desai, was both out of office and the inner counsels of the party. These were the circumstances which led to the selection of Lal Bahadur Shastri as Nehru's suc-

cessor. Shastri, who was distinctive for his small stature and mild manners, was a man of Gandhian principles, of simplicity and dedication of life, of known integrity and tireless industry, a practitioner of conciliation and a lover of 'consensus'. But he did not retire to an *ashram*, adopt the villager's loincloth or resort to fasts; he rose through the hurly-burly of Uttar Pradesh Congress factionalism. To have retained respect for integrity as well as ability in these circumstances was a proof of unusual character. From the secretaryship of Congress he moved to the Cabinet where he was Home Minister at the time of the Kamraj plan. He had just that blend of Gandhian idealism, of personal integrity and proven ability which the situation demanded. He came from the country's heartland; though a Hindi supporter he was not extreme; he had no pronounced enemies. If some did not find much ground for positive support, it was still harder for many others to find convincing grounds for opposition. Here, it seemed, was a practical idealist who might raise the country from its mood of depression and self-questioning and guide it to a new road of achievement.

So Shastri was elected, Morarji not judging it worth while in the end to oppose him openly. Shastri's tenure of office must always remain something of an enigma; the test which would have made or broken him as a leader being removed by his sudden death in January 1966. His qualities were thus described by Michael Brecher: 'humility, patience, respect for conflicting viewpoints, sensitivity to powerful emotional currents, along with subtlety and quiet firmness'. His tactic of consensus Shastri described in these words: 'if I can carry everyone along with me, that is much better. Even those who disagree must feel that their views are listened to. ... This approach may delay decisions a little, but that does not bother me at all. It is a price worth paying.'[1] The flaw in this outlook was that consensus was like an emollient ointment that can assuage the lesser pains but not cure the major ills. Where vital interests or ambitions were at stake it might be either ineffective or too late. Shastri retained most of the outgoing cabinet. Of the three newcomers one was S. K. Patil and another Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru's only daughter and hitherto known as a one-term Congress President and as her father's guardian and hostess. The most immediate impact was made by Patil, influential in Gujarat and a member of the Syndicate. Mrs. Gandhi became Minister of Information; she made no visible impact on her department, but began her journeys to any place where a problem or a crisis existed in the country. These, combined with her sari, her name and her 'royal' connection, before long made her the best known public figure to the broad masses of the country.

During Shastri's nineteen months of office three issues arose to test the consensus doctrine and the firmness of his character. The first was a food shortage caused by a bad harvest and a growing population. Here the Chief Ministers prevented drastic action until the good harvest of 1965

[1] M. Brecher, *Succession in India*, London, 1966, p. 93.

shelved the problem without solving it. Consensus without delay was difficult and delay without consensus bred impatience and a suggestion of indecision. The next test was the Hindi crisis of early 1965, stemming from the proclamation of Hindi as the sole national language on 15 January. Fear and resentment in the south, which wished to retain English as Hindi's twin, erupted in Madras State (Tamil Nadu) with riots in Madras city and through the countryside, including ritual burnings and many deaths. While Mrs. Gandhi visited Madras and Kamraj dallied in Kerala, Shastri again temporized. It was only in March that amendments to the Official Languages Act of 1963 were promised, making English officially usable once more.

The third test came from Pakistan. In April 1965, there were clashes between Indian and Pakistani troops in the nine thousand square-mile marshy area known as the Rann of Kutch, lying between the Sind provincial border and the former Kathiawar States. The Rann is inundated by occasional high tides and, except for a few hillocks, usually by monsoon rain. At first Pakistan had the better of it, but Shastri would neither retreat nor go to the extremes of belligerence. Reinforcements restored the military balance; a cease-fire, agreed on 30 April, was formalized on 30 June and a frontier demarcation by arbitration arranged. The Pakistan case was that the Rann was an arm of the sea and in consequence the frontier should be drawn down its centre. India stood on the old borderline between Sind and the Kathiawar States, which in her view had been the international frontier since 1947.

Shastri emerged from this incident with heightened prestige. He had been both firm and conciliatory; he had stood his ground and won his point. He now had to face a sterner test. Some have thought that this Pakistan move was a probing operation designed to test the morale of the Indian forces after the recent Chinese clash, and that they were encouraged by their initial success to go further. Be this as it may, by August there were signs of action in the highly sensitive Kashmir area. At first there was infiltration into Kashmir but the expected, or hoped for Kashmiri rising failed to occur. In reply the Indians occupied the Haji Pir pass of entry. At the end of the month Pakistan launched an armoured column towards Akhnur, on the vital Kashmir road which would have been broken by its capture. This was open war. The Shastri government showed no hesitation. Appeals to the Security Council were followed by an Indian thrust towards Lahore. Pakistan dubbed this an act of war because the frontier here was internationally recognized whereas the line crossed in Kashmir was a temporary truce line. But Pakistan, and some other powers who might have known better, overlooked the fact that the cease-fire line was itself internationally negotiated and recognized by the United Nations. There followed a short, confused and indecisive war which was ended on 22 September by a Security Council 'cease-fire' and by supply problems which were grinding both sides to a halt. The essential point was that the Akhnur thrust had failed. Mediation efforts sup-

ported by Britain, the United States and Russia led to the Tashkent Conference (4–10 January 1966) at which the Russian Prime Minister, Kosygin, presided. Tense negotiations led to the Tashkent Declaration of 10 January, providing for the peaceful settlement of future disputes, and a return to the positions of 5 August 1965, before the Kashmir infiltration. This meant the evacuation of the Haji Pir pass without a no-war pact or abandonment of guerilla activity. Rising resentment in New Delhi was hushed by the news that Prime Minister Shastri had died of a heart attack in the early hours of 11 January.

So ended the second Indian premiership in doubt and tragedy. We shall never know Lal Bahadur Shastri's full potential; all that one can usefully say is that his conduct during his short ministry ran true to his known character, and that his stature at his death was much greater than it was when he assumed office nineteen months before.

Realignment

The second succession to the premiership was completed in nine days of discussions and deals. The process was not quite as smooth as before but still impressive in its speed and its approach to 'consensus'. Kamraj was more powerful than ever, but the Syndicate showed its first signs of disunity. The deciding factors were the determination to exclude Morarji once more and to present an acceptable image to the country within a year of a general election. Kamraj's was the guiding hand. With Morarji ruled out, there was no other leading figure who could command general support. Opinion thus veered towards Mrs. Gandhi, who remained quietly in the 'wings', with silences which were more eloquent than her utterances. Morarji remained adamant and forced a vote which Mrs. Gandhi won by 355 to 169.

It was no easy inheritance, for the Congress party was itself in crisis. With an election only a year away, it had not refurbished its image with the Kamraj plan. Nehru had made it a massive party of the centre, but now it was being increasingly eroded from both sides, the Jana Sangh and Swatantra parties on the right, the Socialists and Communists to the left; Morarji would have veered to the right. What would Mrs. Gandhi do? At first her steps seemed halting and tentative. She was, in fact, finding her feet. Her inclinations were towards the left, like her father's, but she knew that she was hedged in with middle-of-the-roaders who regarded her as their election agent. The only striking event of her first year of office was a sharp devaluation of the rupee, which will be mentioned later.

When the general election came in 1967 it seemed that the long Congress domination was ending. Its majority in the Lok Sabha declined to fifty; it also lost control of eight of sixteen major States. The separatist D.M.K. swept into power in Madras and elsewhere the Jana Sangh, Swatantra and Communist parties made large gains. But there was no

sign yet of a two-party system. In the non-Congress States, except Tamil Nadu (Madras), coalitions had to be formed and they proved feverish in their manoeuvres and brittle in their texture. The political world still depended upon what happened to the Congress leadership.

Mrs. Gandhi was re-elected and this time compromised with Morarji by appointing him Finance Minister and Deputy Premier. It was an uneasy partnership; but it lasted two years during which the Prime Minister strengthened her national image by tours at home and abroad. Then, in the spring of 1969, two events forced her hand. The right-winger Nijalingappa was elected the next Congress President. Then the respected President Zakir Husain died suddenly and the right wing put forward Sanjiva Reddy, Speaker of the Lok Sabha and a well-known critic of Mrs. Gandhi, as his successor. He tactlessly threatened her with dismissal after the next elections. In certain circumstances the President could hold a key political position, especially in the event of the absence of a clear majority for any one party. Mrs. Gandhi saw herself being surrounded and beleaguered by her critics. She decided to act, and then the lightning struck. She demanded the nationalization of the banks, an old plank of the Congress platform, which threw the Syndicate into confusion but was ratified by the Bangalore Congress. She then dismissed Morarji and supported Vice-President Giri, a veteran Congressman, as an independent candidate for the Presidency. His election was really decisive for it revealed her strength in the country. There followed an open breach between the two wings of the Congress in November 1969. She lost control of the Working Committee by one vote but retained two-thirds of the parliamentary party. With tacit support from left-wing groups she continued in office while both 'wings' looked warily for an opening. The two groups were now known as Congress (R)—ruling—and Congress (O) —organization.

The success of the Congress (R) in the Kerala elections late in 1970 encouraged Mrs. Gandhi to propose the ending of the former ruling princes' pensions and privileges. The success of the Congress (O) in defeating a constitutional amendment to this end by one vote proved their ruin, for it gave Mrs. Gandhi a pretext for appealing to the country before the statutory time limit, at the beginning of 1971. The opposition sought support from the right-wing parties while the left-wing groups moved towards the government. It was the case of a new leader appealing to the people over the heads of the politicians. Many doubted if it would work, and this made the result the more dramatic. Congress (R), with 353 seats in the Lok Sabha, had an overall majority of 165, while Congress (O) became a splinter group of 23. Once again the mirage of a two-party system had dissolved. India had a new leader with a massive ruling party majority at her command.

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Crisis, Confidence and Perplexity

It seemed that Mrs. Gandhi now had the majority she needed to carry out a wide-ranging policy of reform. But fate intervened in the form of the revolt in East Pakistan. Within days of the Indian election result, the arrest of Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rahman and the spread of a guerilla campaign against the Pakistan military occupation faced India with a new problem. India's role as an interested spectator turned to embarrassment as a trickle of refugees swelled into a flood until it numbered nearly ten million. It was reckoned that about two million of these were Muslims and the rest Hindu cultivators from the northern parts of East Pakistan. It had not been thought that they would amount in all to more than a million, about the number of Muslim Biharis who migrated to East Pakistan in the troubles of 1949–50.

What was to be done with them all? They had entered India's poorest and overcrowded state of West Bengal. Their bare maintenance was reliably estimated to be at the rate of £225 million or $500 million or 405 crores of rupees at the then rates of exchange. Their continuance in West Bengal and Assam would swamp those States' economies and no other State was willing or perhaps capable of taking them. To keep them in Arab-style refugee camps would court both human and economic disaster. To drive them over the border again would be inhuman and was unthinkable.

As the problem built up in the next few months the Indian response was cautious. The Indian public was soothed with expressions of sympathy. The refugees' plight was publicized and Mrs. Gandhi then set out on a round of visits in the West and America to seek understanding, financial aid for maintenance and political intervention for a settlement. When these visits proved fruitless, except in expressions of sympathy, more active measures were considered. More active support was given to the guerilla bands (the *Mukti Fauj* or Freedom army and the *Mukti Bahini* or Freedom brothers). But here the international situation became vital. India could not move in the face of the hostility of more than one Great Power for she depended too much on them for economic aid. For some time the United States and Russia had tacitly agreed that India should not become a South Asian power centre and that therefore Pakistan should be supported within limits. Chinese support for Pakistan inclined Russia towards India but only marginally. Then came the Nixon initiative towards China, and of this India took deft advantage. On 9 August a long considered treaty of friendship with Russia was signed. No military aid was promised, but Russian goodwill meant supplies of various kinds and above all, a veto on outside intervention. It proved to be a decisive stroke. Guerillas were not only sheltered, but supplied, armed and finally supported. It was a policy of pinpricks designed to provoke Pakistan into offensive action as President Roosevelt had provoked Japan with his oil sanctions. And it worked. On 3 December President Yahya Khan staged

his Pearl Harbor with an attack on north Indian airfields. But the planned rocket turned out to be a damp squib. Instead of immobilizing the Indians it removed their inhibitions to action and any outside will to intervention. President Nixon sent the Sixth Fleet into the Bay of Bengal, an action irritating to the Indians without helping the Pakistanis. China remained neutral so long as West Pakistan was virtually untouched. The lightning struck: in twelve days the East Pakistan campaign ended with the capture of Dacca and 90,000 Pakistani troops, and the birth of the State of Bangladesh.

The whole episode was a diplomatic excercise of Bismarckian skill, so dividing opponents that they found themselves isolated at the moment of crisis, which was followed by a military operation of German precision and efficiency. Mrs. Gandhi now bestrode the sub-continent like the winged Victory of the ancient Greeks. The spirit of the country was transformed; both she and they had found a new confidence; the snowy sorrows of 1962 were forgotten. Since then the broad policy has been one of détente. With Pakistan the Simla Conferences of June–July 1972 led to troop withdrawals on both sides by the end of the year, followed by the return of the Pakistani prisoners and Bangladeshi internees during 1973. Since then economic relations have been re-established and free communications opened across the Panjab border. The first through train from Amritsar to Lahore (1976) was the symbol of this. A jarring note has been an underground atomic explosion announced by India on 18 May 1974 which led to the Pakistan government's purchase (August 1976) of an atomic reactor from France. With China détente has also visibly proceeded, leading to a recent exchange of ambassadors. The outstanding problem appears to be that of the United States where the Nixon and C.I.A. revelations have fed Indian suspicions of covert American attempts at intervention.

Lastly, something must be said of India's economic progress. There has been progress, crisis and confidence again. The first measure was the drastic devaluation of the rupee in 1966. Painful as it was, it enabled Indian exports to regain much lost ground, particularly in the Asian markets. Next came the fourth five-year plan which was launched, after delays and revisions, in 1970. The public sector took nearly two-thirds of the total outlay, mainly for investment in organized industries and in communications. Then came the 'Green revolution', the use of fertilizers and new strains of wheat and rice to increase production. In the case of wheat the increase was dramatic and in the case of rice substantial. To fertilizers and new seed strains was added a more scientific usage of the land, which has been pronounced by a leading European authority to be some of the most fertile in the world, and the mass sinking of tube-wells in unirrigated lands. It was hoped that production could be doubled in twenty years thus outstripping the present population doubling every twenty-eight years. Grain production, which was 74.2 million tonnes in 1966–7, is now well over the 100 million mark.

Population growth was the shadow which still hung over all these efforts, the cloud which persistently obscured the sun of prosperity. Here also progress was claimed for control measures. Government of India figures at the end of 1970 showed that prevented births had increased from 100,000 in 1964 to over 1,400,000 in 1969 and to an estimated ten millions by 1974. Estimating what will not happen is much more difficult than recording what has, so these figures must remain somewhat speculative. All that we can say at present is that the magnitude of the problem is appreciated by the authorities, that strenuous efforts are being made to solve it in the face of much opposition caused by ignorance, inertia and traditional feelings. In the author's opinion it is on the solution of this problem that the hinge of India's immediate destiny hangs.

The upsurge of confidence generated by devaluation, the Bangladesh victory and the Green revolution was dissipated by the sudden growth of inflation. A steady price increase of 3–4 per cent per annum had been in line with currencies elsewhere and could be accounted for by the borrowing under the five-year plans. But refugee and then war expenditure, along with the demands of the fourth five-year plan, began to boost the inflation rate. When O.P.E.C. quadrupled its oil prices in 1973 the rate shot up to the near crisis point of 25 per cent. In 1972 India's consumption of petroleum products was 22.6 million tonnes, most of which was refined from the crude state in the country itself, while 7.37 million tonnes was produced locally. Still there was a large gap to be filled by imports. And those imports mostly came from Iran, a leader in the drive to raise general oil prices. And industrial expansion meant increased consumption of oil products which are estimated to reach 36 million tonnes by 1978.

This is the rough outline of the economic difficulties of the last few years. India is energetically seeking to increase her production of crude oil; finds have been considerable but not sensational. She is also seeking other means of energy such as increased coal production (10 per cent to over 80 million tonnes), natural gas and hydroelectricity. But all such measures take time while the citizen feels the crippling pinch of rapidly increasing prices. It was in these circumstances that the euphoria induced by the Pakistan war and the Green revolution evaporated, to be replaced by a fresh wave of foreboding and bitterness. This disillusion was transmitted to the political plane in the form of rising discontent, of criticism of governmental inefficiency and of general corruption. It found leaders to express it in the now aged Morarji Desai and elderly Jai Prakash Narayan, newly returned from a self-imposed retirement. Then the issue was brought to a personal focus by the Allahabad High Court's decision on an electoral petition against Mrs. Gandhi's election to the Lok Sabha at the last general election. There followed the declaration of the Emergency in June 1975.

AUTHORITIES

For the first few crisis years H. V. Hodson's *The Great Divide* and V. P. Menon's *Transfer of Power in India* are still valuable. For the tension between Nehru, Patel and Gandhi, Brecher's *Nehru*, Parikh's *Patel* and Tendulkar's *Gandhi* may be consulted. For Gandhi's assassination there is a new account based on material supplied by some of the surviving assassin group itself in L. Collins and D. Lapierre, *Freedom at Midnight* (1975). For Patel's dealings with the Princely states see the first-hand testimony of V. P. Menon in *Integration of the Indian States* (Princeton, U.S.A., 1962). For the Partition massacres there is an Indian Government White Paper; P. Moon's *Divide and Quit* (1961) is both a personal testimony and a valuable reflection. See also G. D. Khosla's judicial study *Stern Reckoning* (New Delhi, 1950–) and compare these two authors' estimates of casualties.

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CHRONOLOGY

PART III, BOOK I, 1740–1818

MUGHULS AND MARATHAS	BRITISH AND FRENCH	BRITAIN AND EUROPE
1724 Hyderabad virtually independent		
1738 Malwa ceded to Marathas		
1739 Nadir Shah in Delhi: loss of Kabul		
1740–56 Ali Vardi Khan *Subadar* of Bengal	1744–9 First Anglo-French War	1740–8 War of the Austrian Succession
1744 Maratha invasion of Bengal	1742–54 Dupleix, Governor of Pondicherry	
1745 Maratha conquest of Orissa	1746 French capture Madras	
1748 Repulse of Ahmad Shah Abdali: Death of Muhammad Shah	1748 Death of Nizam-ul-Mulk	1748 Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle
1750 Mughul loss of Gujarat and Sind	1750–4 Second Anglo-French War (unofficial)	
1752 Panjab and Sind ceded to Afghans	1750–8 Bussy in Hyderabad	
1753 Imad-ul-Mulk *Wazir* of the Empire	1751–2 Sieges of Arcot and Trichinopoly	
1756 Ahmad Shah Abdali in Delhi		1756–63 Seven Years War
1758 Marathas occupy the Panjab	1758–63 Third Anglo-French War	1757–61 Ministry of the elder Pitt and Newcastle
1761 Battle of Panipat	1761 Fall of Pondicherry	1760 Conquest of Canada
INDIAN INDIA	BRITISH INDIA	BRITAIN AND EUROPE
1756–75 Shuja-ud-daula Nawab-Wazir of Oudh	1757 Battle of Plassey	

INDIAN INDIA	BRITISH INDIA	BRITAIN AND EUROPE
1761–82 Haidar Ali ruler of Mysore	1757–60 Clive's first Governorship	
1761–72 Madhava Rao, Peshwa	1763 Defeat of the Nawab Mir Kasim	
	1764 Battle of Baksar	
1768 Gurkhas take Khatmandu	1765–7 Clive's second Governorship	
1772 Return of Shah Alam to Delhi	1765 Grant of *diwani* of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa to the Company	
1772–82 Mirza Najaf Khan chief Mughul minister	1773 The Regulating Act passed	1775–82 American War of Independence
1773 Ragunath Rao and the Maratha Civil War	1772–85 Warren Hastings' Governorship	1770–82 Ministry of Lord North
	1775–82 First Maratha war	
1782–98 Tipu Sultan, ruler of Mysore	1780–4 Second Mysore war	1783–1801 Premiership of the younger Pitt
1785 Sindia controls Delhi		
1787 Defeat of Sindia at Lalsont	1784 Pitt's India Act passed	
	Asiatic Society of Bengal founded	1788–95 Impeachment of Warren Hastings
1788 Blinding at Shah Alam	1786–90 Reforms of Cornwallis	1789 French Revolution begins
1788–1803 Sindia controls Delhi	1790–2 Third Mysore War	1791 Pitt's Canada Act
1792 Ranjit Singh head of Shukerchakia *misl*		1792–4 French Reign of Terror
Sindia's defeat of Holkar	1793 Permanent Settlement at Bengal	
1794 Death of Madhu Rao Sindia at Poona		
1795 Battle of Kharda	1798–9 Fourth Mysore war	1798 Napoleon's expedition to Egypt
1798 Zaman Shah in Lahore	1799 Fall of Seringapatam, death of Tipu Sultan	
1799 Ranjit Singh ruler of Lahore	1799 William Carey at Serampore	1799 Napoleon First Consul

Indian India	British India	Britain and Europe
1800 Death of Nana Fadnavis	1801 Annexation of the Carnatic and part of Oudh	
1801 Defeat of the Bhangis by Ranjit Singh	1802 Treaty of Bassein with Peshwa Baji Rao	1805 Battles of Trafalgar and Austerlitz
1803 Occupation of Delhi by Lord Lake	1803–5 Second Maratha War	
1806 Ranjit takes Ludhiana	1806 The Vellore Mutiny	1807 Peace of Tilsit: Franco-Russian alliance
1806–15 Rise of the Pindaris in Central India	1808 Missions of Malcolm (Persia), Elphinstone (Kabul), and Metcalfe (Panjab)	
	1809 Treaty of Amritsar	
	1811 Conquest of Java	1812 The Moscow expedition
	1813 Charter renewal: free trade and admission of missionaries	
	1814–16 The Gurkha War	1815 Battle of Waterloo
	1816 Hindu College, Calcutta (Vidyala), founded	
	1817–18 Pindari campaign and last Maratha war	
1818–19 Sikh conquest of Multan and Kashmir	1818 General settlement	
	1819 First British house in Simla	

Diplomatic and Military	Political	Social, Cultural, and Economic	Britain and Europe
1819 Occupation of Singapore	1819–27 Elphinstone Governor of Bombay	1815–30 Activity of Ram Mohan Roy and the Serampore missionaries	1815 Congress of Vienna
	1820–4 Munro Governor of Madras	1817 Mill's *History of India* published	
	1823 John Adam. Press restrictions	1822 Regulation XXII (Land Settlement)	1821 The Greek revolt
1824–6 First Burman War Arakan and Tenasserim annexed			
	1828–35 Lord W. Bentinck Governor-General	1829 *Brahmo Samaj* founded	1828–9 The Russo-Turkish War
1827 Siege of Bharatpur		Prohibition of suttee	
1831 Burnes's journey up the Indus	1831 Administration of Mysore taken over	1829–37 Suppression of *thagi*	1830 July Revolution in France
Bentinck's meeting with Ranjit at Rupar	1833 Charter Act. Company's trade abolished		
1834 Peshawar taken by Ranjit	1834 Coorg annexed	1830–3 Ram Mohan Roy in England	1830–41 Palmerston Foreign Secretary
		1833 Regulation IX (Land Settlement)	1832 Great Reform Bill passed
	1835 Press restrictions raised by Metcalfe	1835 Macaulay's Minute: Education Resolution	
1837 Burnes Mission to Kabul	1836–42 Lord Auckland	English the Court language	1833 Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi

Diplomatic and Military	Political	Social, Cultural, and Economic	Britain and Europe
1838 Tripartite Treaty		1837–8 Famine in North India	
1839 Death of Ranjit Singh			
1839–42 First Afghan War			1841–6 Sir R. Peel Prime Minister
1843 Conquest of Sind	1842–4 Lord Ellenborough	1843 Abolition of slavery	The Railway boom. Dalhousie at the Board of Trade
1844 Defeat of Gwalior army			
1845–6 First Sikh War	1844–8 Lord Hardinge		1846 Repeal of the Corn Laws
1848–9 Second Sikh War Annexation of the Panjab	1848–56 Lord Dalhousie		1848 The year of Revolutions
1852 Second Burman War. Rangoon and Pegu annexed	1853 Annexation of Nagpur Cession of Berar by Nizam Renewal of the Charter Competition for the I.C.S.	1853 Dalhousie's railway minute First railway opened Telegraph from Calcutta to Agra	1851 The Great Exhibition
		1854 Sir C. Wood's Despatch on Education	1854–6 The Crimean War
	1857–8 The Mutiny	Rise of the jute industry	
		1857 Foundation of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras Universities	

External and Frontier	Political	Social, Cultural, and Economic	Britain and the World
	1858 India under the Crown: Queen's Proclamation	1859–60 James Wilson's financial reforms	1859–60 Unification of Italy
		1859 Indigo disputes in Bengal	
	1861 Indian Councils Act	1861 Indian Penal Code introduced	1861–5 The American Civil War
1863 Death of Dost Muhammad	High Courts Act	The cotton boom	1862 Rise of Bismarck
The Ambela campaign	1862–3 Lord Elgin	Famine in N.W. India	
	1864–9 Sir J. Lawrence	1865 Famine in Orissa	1867 End of the Japanese Shugunate: the new era
1868 Subsidies for Amir Sher Ali		1868 Panjab and Oudh Tenancy Acts	1868–74 Gladstone's first ministry
1869 Ambala meeting with Sher Ali	1869–72 Lord Mayo		1869 Opening of the Suez Canal
	1870 Provincial financial settlement		1870–1 The Franco-Prussian War: The German empire
	1872–6 Lord Northbrook		
1873 Russians take Khiva	1876–80 Lord Lytton	1875 Aligarh College founded by S. Ahmad Khan	1874–80 Disraeli Prime Minister
1876 Occupation of Quetta	1876 The Queen Empress of India	Arya Samaj founded by Swami Dayananda	1876–8 Russo-Turkish War

External and Frontier	Political	Social, Cultural, and Economic	Britain and the World
1878–80 Second Afghan War	1879 Vernacular Press Act	1876–8 Famine in S. India	1878 Congress of Berlin
1880 Abdur Rahman Amir of Kabul		1879 Cotton duties abolished	
	1880–4 Lord Ripon	1880 Famine Commission Report: Famine Codes	1880–5 Gladstone's second ministry
	1881 Rendition of Mysore	1881 First Factory Act	1882 British occupation of Egypt
	1883–4 Local Government Acts	1882 Hunter Educational Commission	
1884 Merv taken by Russians	1883–4 Ilbert Bill controversy		
1885 The Panjdeh incident	1884–8 Lord Dufferin	1885 Bengal Tenancy Act	
1885–6 The Third Burman War Annexation of Upper Burma	1885 Indian National Congress founded	1886 Death of Shri Ram Krishna: The Ram Krishna Mission	1886 Gladstone's Home Rule Bill
			1886–92 Lord Salisbury Prime Minister
	1888–94 Lord Lansdowne	1887 Tata's Empress cotton mill at Nagpur	1890 Fall of Bismarck
	1892 Indian Councils Act	1891 Second Factory Act. Age of Consent Act	
1895 Chitral expedition	1894–9 Lord Elgin II	1893 Vivekananda at Parliament of Religions at Chicago	1894–5 Sino-Japanese War

External and Frontier	Political	Social, Cultural, and Economic	Britain and the World
1897 Frontier risings	1899–1905 Lord Curzon	1896–1900 Plague and Famine	1899–1902 Boer War
1901 Habibullah Amir of Afghanistan	1900 North-West Frontier Province created	1900 Land Alienation Act	1904 Anglo-French entente
1903–4 Expedition to Lhasa	1903 Delhi Durbar	1904 Universities Act: Co-operative Societies Act Archaeological Department	1904–5 Russo-Japanese War
	1905 Partition of Bengal		

FOREIGN	POLITICAL	SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND ECONOMIC	BRITAIN AND THE WORLD
	1905–10 Lord Minto II	1906 Servants of India Society founded by G. K. Gokhale	1905 Liberal Ministry in office
	1906 Muslim League founded		
	1907 Surat Congress–Moderate–extremist clash	1907 Tata Iron and Steel Company founded	1908 Anglo-Russian entente
	1909 Morley Minto reforms		Persian revolution
	1910–16 Lord Hardinge II		Young Turk revolution
	1911 Delhi Durbar: Bengal partition revoked		1911 Chinese revolution begins
	1910–14 Government–Congress harmony	1913 Nobel Prize for Rabindranath Tagore	
	1915 Death of G. K. Gokhale	1914 Mahatma Gandhi returns from S. Africa	1914–18 World War I. Indian troops in France
	1916–21 Lord Chelmsford	1915 Home Rule League	1915 Mesopotamian expedition
	1917 Declaration on self-government		1917 Russian revolution
	1918 Montagu–Chelmsford Report		
1919 Third Afghan War	1919 Amritsar		1918 President Wilson's Fourteen Points

Foreign	Political	Social, Cultural, and Economic	Britain and the World
1919–29 Amanullah King of Afghanistan	1919 Government of India Act	1919 Sadler University Commission Report	1919 Treaty of Versailles
1919 India a member of the League of Nations	1920–2 Non-cooperation movement Khilafat movement		1919 League of Nations formed
	1921 Montford reforms inaugurated	1921 Fiscal autonomy established	1921 Ataturk and national Turkey
	1921–6 Lord Reading		
	1921 Moplah rebellion		1922 Mussolini dictator of Italy
	1923 Swaraj Party formed	1923 Tariff Board set up	
	1925 Death of C. R. Das	1925 Cotton excise abolished	
1929 Afghan revolt	1926–31 Lord Irwin		1926 Imperial Conference redefines Dominion status
Nadir Shah King of Afghanistan	1928 Simon Commission		
	1930–1 First Civil Disobedience movement	1929 Sarda Act passed	1929–33 The great depression
	1930–2 Round Table Conferences		1931 Statute of Westminster
	1931 Gandhi–Irwin truce	Mahatma Gandhi's Harijan movement	
	1931–6 Lord Willingdon		

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Foreign	Political	Britain and the World
1934 Murder of Nadir Shah	1932 Second Civil Disobedience movement	1933 Hitler dictator of Germany
Zahir Shah King of Afghanistan	1935 Government of India Act 1936–43 Lord Linlithgow	
1937 Burma separated from India	1937 Provincial autonomy: Congress ministries	1938 Austria annexed by Germany The Munich agreement
	1939 Resignation of Congress ministries	1939–45 World War II
	1940 Muslim League declares for Pakistan	1941 Germany invades Russia
	1942 The Cripps Mission Congress disturbances	Japan attacks U.S.A.
	1943 The Bengal famine	1945 End of war. Labour Government in Britain
	1943–7 Lord Wavell	United Nations Organization formed
	1945–6 General elections in India	
	1946 The Cabinet Mission Violence in Bengal, &c.	
	1947 Lord Mountbatten	

Political	Pakistan and Asia	Social and Economic	International
1947 Aug. 14/15. Indian Independence: Lord Mountbatten, Governor-General Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister			
1947 Aug.-Sept. Panjab massacres	1947 October. Accession of Kashmir to India		
1947–8 Integration of the Indian States with the new India			
1948 Jan. 30. Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi	1948 Apr. Water crisis with Pakistan	1948 Atomic Energy Commission created	
1948 June. C. Rajagopalachari, Governor-General	1948 July. U.N. Truce Line in Kashmir agreed		
1948 Sept. Police Action in Hyderabad	1948 Sept. Death of Mohd. Ali Jinnah		
1949 Jana Sangh Party founded	1949 Jan. Conference on Indonesia		1949 Russia explodes an atomic bomb
	1949 Oct. Mao Tse-tung in power in China		
1950 Jan. 26. Constitution of the Indian Union promulgated Rajendra Prasad, first President of India		1950 Indian National Planning Commission set up	1950 Outbreak of the Korean war. Indian neutrality

Political	Pakistan and Asia	Social and Economic	International
1950 Dec. Death of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel			
1951–2 Oct.–Feb. First National General Election	1951 Fall of the Rana regime in Nepal	1951 First Five-Year Plan inaugurated	
		1952 Panchayati Raj—Pilot scheme—commenced	
			1953–61 Gen. Eisenhower President of the U.S.A.
	1954 Indo–Chinese Treaty: the Panch Shila agreed		1954 Death of Josef Stalin.
			1954 Geneva Conference on Vietnam
	1955 The Bandung Conference	1955 Hindu Marriage Act passed	1955 Visit of Marshal Bulganin and N. Khrushchev to India
1956 States Reorganization Act passed		1956 Second Five-Year Plan inaugurated: steel plants sponsored by Great Britain, the USSR and West Germany	1956 Hydrogen bomb exploded by the U.S.A.
		1956 Hindu Succession Act, etc. passed	1956 Oct. The Suez crisis in Egypt and the suppression of the Hungarian revolt by Russia
1957 Second National General Election			
	1958 Oct. Ayub Khan assumes power in Pakistan	1958 Nation-wide Panchayati Raj launched	

Political	Pakistan and Asia	Social and Economic	International
1959 Swantantra Party founded	1959 Flight of the Dalai Lama to India		
	1960 The Indus Water Treaty		1960 Breach in relations between China and Russia
	1960 Union of Kashmir with India		
	1961 Occupation of Portuguese Goa	1961 Third Five-Year Plan launched	1961 Visit of Queen Elizabeth II to India
1962 Dr S. Radhakrishnan 2nd President of India	1962 Indo–Chinese hostilities on the Tibetan frontiers		
1962 Third National General Election			
1963 The Kamraj Plan			
1964 May 27. Death of Jawaharlal Nehru Lal Bahadur Shastri Prime Minister			
	1965 April & Aug-Sept. Hostilities with Pakistan		
1966 Jan 11. Death of Lal Bahadur Shastri:	1966 Jan. 4–10. Tashkent Conference		
1966 Jan. 20. Mrs Indira Gandhi Prime Minister			
1967 Dr Zakir Husain President of India			
1967 Fourth National General Election			

Political	Pakistan and Asia	Social and Economic	International
1969 Death of Zakir Husain: V. V. Giri 4th President of India	1969 Apr. Gen Yahya Khan President of Pakistan	1969 Fourth Five-Year Plan launched	
1969 Congress split into Congress (O) and Congress (R)			
1971 Feb–March. Fifth National General Election	1971 Mar. Revolt in East Pakistan Arrest of Sh. Mujib-ur-Rahman		1971 President Nixon's visit to C hina
	1971 Dec. 8. War with Pakistan: Recognition of the new state of Bangladesh		
	1971 Dec. Z. A. Bhutto President of Pakistan		
		1973 Quadrupling of oil prices by COPEC (oil producing countries)	
1975 June. State of Emergency declared			

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